AFTER THE BATTLE

THE GRANVILLE RAID
INVASION OF CRETE 1941

Number 47

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NUMBER 47

Edited by Winston G. Ramsey

Published by Battle of Britain Prints International Ltd., 3 New Plaistow Road, Stratford, London E15 3JA, England Telephone: 01-534 8833

Printed in Great Britain by Plaistow Press Magazines Ltd., London E15 3JA

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After the Battle is published quarterly on the 15th of February, May, August and November.

United Kingdom Newsagent Distribution:
Seymour Press Ltd., 334 Brixton Road
London SW9 7AG.
Telephone 01-733 4444

United States Distribution and Subscriptions:
Bill Dean Books Ltd.,
151-49 7th Avenue,
Whitestone, New York 11357.
Telephone: 1-212-767-6632

Canadian Distribution and Subscriptions:
Yesterday's Glory,
PO Box 393,
Dorval, Quebec, H4Y 1BI

Australian Distribution:
Technical Book and Magazine Company, Pty, Ltd.,
289-299 Swanston Street, Melbourne, Victoria, 3000.
Telephone: 633 3951, 663 3955

Dutch Language Edition:
Quo Vadis,
F.C. Kuyperstraat 9, 3761 EG Soest.
Telephone: 02155-18641

Italian Distribution:
Tuttostoria, Via Bruno Longhi, 10, 43100 Parma.
Telephone: (0521) 21289

CONTENTS

OPERATION MERKUR — THE GERMAN INVASION OF CRETE 1
The First Wave 5
The Second Wave 9
The Failure of the Seaborne Reinforcement 14
The Deciding Phase 17
The Pursuit Eastwards 20
The Evacuation 24
Crete Today 28

IT HAPPENED HERE
The Kidnapping of General Kreipe 32

READERS' INVESTIGATIONS
The Granville Raid 37

Front Cover: The monument built during the summer of 1941 by men of the II. Bataillon, Luftlande-Sturmregiment, on Crete. It stands just to the south of the Canae-Maleme road on the western side of Canae. Although the memorial is still intact, the Swastika on which the eagle is standing has been cemented over to obliterate it. The original inscription can still be seen: 'II. BATAILLON STURMREGIMENT IM KAMPF AUF KRETA VOM 20-28.5.1941 MALEME. GALATAS. KASTELLI. CHANIA. EUCH TOTEN GEHORT DER DANK DIE IHR FERN DER HEIMAT GETREU EUREM FAHNENEID DAS LEBEN GABET UNSREM GROSSDEUTSCHLAND ZUR MAHNUNG FÜR ALLE DIE HIER VERWEILEN'.

Centre pages: The water's edge at Suda Bay on the western end of Crete was the setting chosen for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's cemetery for the Allied troops who died on the island. (CWGC)

Back Cover: Last resting place for the two German commandos killed at Granville: the first charnel-house built by the German War Graves Commission in France at Mont-de-Huisnes contains a total of 11,931 dead. (VDK)

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ISSN: 0306-154X

Situated on the northern coast of Crete facing Greece, the wide, deep Suda Bay was a perfect location for a naval anchorage. By 1941 a considerable Royal Naval base had been established at Suda for the refuelling and resupply of vessels reinforcing Allied forces in the Eastern Mediterranean. *Above:* **The First World War battleship HMS Barham is oiled while** *below* **HMS Nubian, a 1,870-ton Tribal class destroyer helps in the evacuation of troops from Greece. (IWM)**

Realising the importance of Suda Bay to the British, capitano di fregata Vittorio Moccagatta, commanding the Italian Tenth Light Flotilla, established his force on Leros, one of the Dodecanese islands off the western coast of Turkey. On the night of March 25/26, 1941, six 'barchini' — explosive motor torpedo boats — under tenente di vascello Luigi Faggioni entered the bay, successfully avoiding British patrols and three net defences to attack the cruiser HMS York, also scoring a hit on the tanker Perides. Today Suda Bay is a Greek naval base with all photography forbidden — our comparison was taken from the northern shore. **(See also page 30.)**

OPERATION MERKUR

THE GERMAN INVASION OF CRETE

BY JEAN PAUL PALLUD

British troops were despatched to the Greek island of Crete immediately after the Italian surprise attack against Greece in October 1940 and a naval fuelling base was established at Suda Bay, where the harbour installations were improved, while airfields were designated for the Royal Air Force. When the Germans extended the war to Greece in early April 1941 Crete served as a transit area for the British and Dominion force fighting on the mainland, but before the month was out it had become the collecting point for most of the troops evacuated from Greece when the battle was lost.

Possession of Crete was of great strategic importance. In the maintenance of British naval supremacy in the eastern Mediterranean, Suda provided the Mediterranean Fleet with a station some 420 miles forward of its main base at Alexandria and, as long as Crete was retained, there was the prospect of using its airfields to counter the Axis air threat. For the Germans, the island afforded an ideal prospective base for conducting offensive air and naval operations and for supporting a ground offensive against Egypt. (Its capture would also deny the RAF its remaining potential bases for striking at Germany's Ploesti oilfields in Romania.)

The staff of Luftflotte 4, which had been committed in the Balkans under the command of General Alexander Löhr, conceived the idea of capturing the island and put forward a plan to Göring at the time of the invasion of Greece. He thought highly of it but the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht (Armed Forces High Command), which was somewhat concerned by the threat posed by Malta to operations in North Africa, did not like the choice of Crete and would have preferred action against Malta. On April 20, after a conference with Generalleutnant Kurt Student, the commander of XI. Fliegerkorps, Hitler decided in favour of invading Crete rather than Malta and five days later Directive No. 28 was issued, specifying Operation 'Merkur' (Mercury) to capture the island. This was to be a Luftwaffe affair, with executive responsibility in the hands of General Löhr.

Despite the poor road and railway network of Greece, and destroyed or mined harbours, the assembly of all the units that were to participate in Operation 'Merkur' took place within a little less than two weeks, although the resulting logistical problems caused the operation to be postponed for a few days and the date of the attack to be put back from May 16 to May 20.

The XI. Fliegerkorps of General Student was to be responsible for the actual assault on the island. It had ten air transport wings with a total of approximately 500 Ju 52 transports and 80 DFS 230 gliders available to airlift the attacking forces from their departure airfields in the Athens area at Corinth, Dadion, Elefsina, Megara, Phaleron, Tanagra, and Topolis. The assault troops consisted of the Luftlande-Sturmregiment (Generalmajor Meindl), the 7. Flieger-Division (Generalleutnant Süssmann), and the 5. Gebirgs-Division (Generalmajor Ringel) which had been brought in to replace the 22. Infanterie-Division which could not be transferred in

Top: **British officers on a reconnaissance tour on the heights above Suda Bay early in 1941. (IWM)** *Above:* **With a profusion of 'Taking pictures is forbidden' signs every hundred yards on the Akrotiri peninsula along the northern shore of the bay, there was little chance of a detailed exploration to find the exact spot.**

time from Romania where it guarded the Ploesti oilfields. The 5. Gebirgs-Division of mountain troops, unlike the Infanterie-Division, which had been trained for air landings, had no practical experience of airborne operations. Together with one regiment (Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 141) of the 6. Gebirgs-Division the total strength available for the invasion was about 25,000 men. The mountain troops were at hand, having participated in the Greek campaign, but most of the airborne troops had to be brought from Germany — by rail to Arad and Craiova in Romania and from there by truck via Sofia and Salonika to the airfields in the Athens area. Their specialised equipment was transported by rail to the Black Sea port of Constanza, thence shipped to Greece.

The provision of fighter and bomber support for 'Merkur' — including anti-shipping operations aimed at chasing the Royal Navy from the waters around the island — was the responsibility of the VIII. Fliegerkorps commanded by General Wolfram Freiherr von Richthofen. For this it had about 150 Ju 87 dive-bombers of Sturzkampfgeschwader 2 (an unknown pilot of the 1. Staffel was Hans Ulrich Rudel who was to end the war as a much decorated Oberst and a Stuka hero); about 120 Do 17s of Kampfgeschwader 2; about 40 He 111s of the II. Gruppe of Kampfgeschwader 26; about 90 Me 109s from Jagdgeschwader 27, and about 90 Me 110s of Zerstörergeschwader 26 and 76. There were also the reconnaissance Ju 88s of the 2. Staffel of Fernaufklärungsgruppe 11. The Stuka and Me 109 wings were based on Greek airfields in the southern Peloponnesus (such as Molai) as well as recently built airfields on the Aegean islands — Karpathos, for instance, only about sixty miles from Crete. The Me 110 units were stationed near Argos in the northern Peloponnesus while the bombers and reconnaissance aircraft were to fly from bases in the Athens area and Thessalia.

From Romania a wing of He 111 bombers belonging to the II. Gruppe of Kampfgeschwader 4 were already engaged by Luftflotte 4 in carrying out mining sorties over the Suez Canal to hamper the Royal Navy near its Egyptian bases. Additional assistance was planned from bomber wings of X. Fliegerkorps, in particular the Ju 88s of Lehrgeschwader 1.

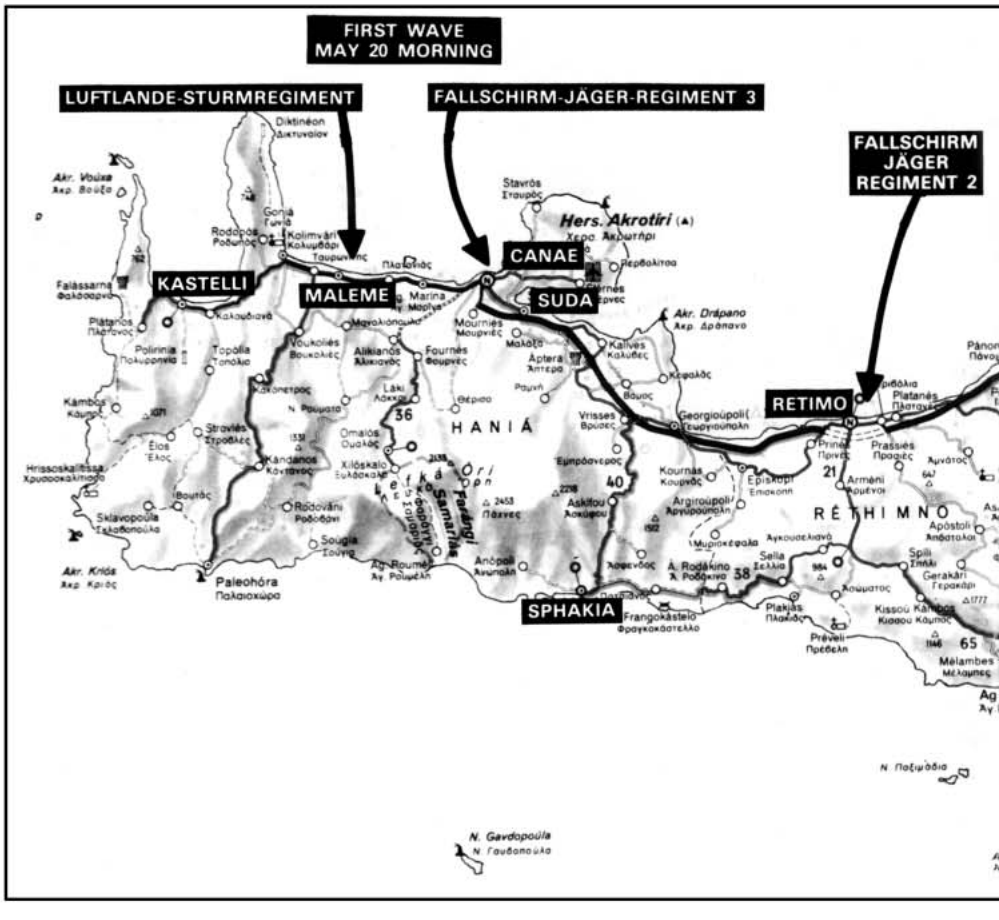
Konteradmiral Karlgeorge Schüster (Admirals Südost, the Naval Commander South-East) had no German naval units under his command but was responsible for the organisation of convoys for landing further troops as well as the heavy equipment that could not be airlifted (field guns, anti-tank guns and the panzers of the second battalion of Panzer-Regiment 31), and ammunition, rations and other supplies. The transport vessels had been commandeered during the Greek campaign and were assembled in the port of Piraeus; the motley collection of boats at his disposal and the manifest weakness of the Italian Navy, whose torpedo boats were to protect the reinforcement convoys, caused him to view the operation with misgivings.

The island of Crete is about 160 miles long and from about 8 to 35 miles wide. Mountains traverse the interior, rising to just over 8,000 feet. In 1941 the single main road ran close to the northern shore between Maleme in the west and Heraklion in the east, through Canea, Suda Bay, and Retimo. Less than a handful of minor roads threaded over the mountains; the one to Sphakia (Hora Sfakion) which was to figure prominently in the battle ending abruptly for vehicles about 500 feet above the village. The three RAF airfields, all on the northern coast, of Maleme, Retimo, and Heraklion were humble affairs even by the standards of the time. The only efficient harbour — also on the northern coast — was Suda; the rest being little more than fishing ports.

The German commander-in-chief on the battlefield. The commander of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1, Oberst Bräuer, (second from left) shows Generalleutnant Student the small hill on which he had his command post during the hectic hours of the battle for Heraklion. On the left Major Erich Walther, commander of I. Bataillon, with Major Karl-Lothar Schulz, commander of III. Bataillon, on the right. (ECP Armées)

The plan of attack which was finally adopted was an ambitious one. It aimed at gaining possession of all the strategic points on the island in one day but was risky in that the relatively weak force dropped at each point might be scattered over a wide area, and therefore be ineffective, while air support would be difficult to provide everywhere at the same time. It called for about 15,000 troops to be airlifted to the island and for about 7,000 to be landed by sea. Because there were not enough aircraft the airborne assault had to be carried out in two waves using the same transports for both.

The first wave was to strike at H-Hour against two objectives: troops of the Luftlande-Sturmregiment were to be landed by parachute drop at Maleme airfield, in the wake of 3. and 4. Kompanie landing in gliders; Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 units were to drop near Canae, in the wake of the gliderborne 1. and 2. Kompanie of the



When Jean Paul Pallud visited Crete in August 1984 he established that this shot had been taken east of Heraklion. It is important to note that the spelling of all place names in Crete has undergone a drastic change on current maps, i.e. for Heraklion read IRÁKLIO or HPAKΛEIO and so on. We have used the wartime spellings familiar to servicemen at the time, most of which were based on the Roman form.

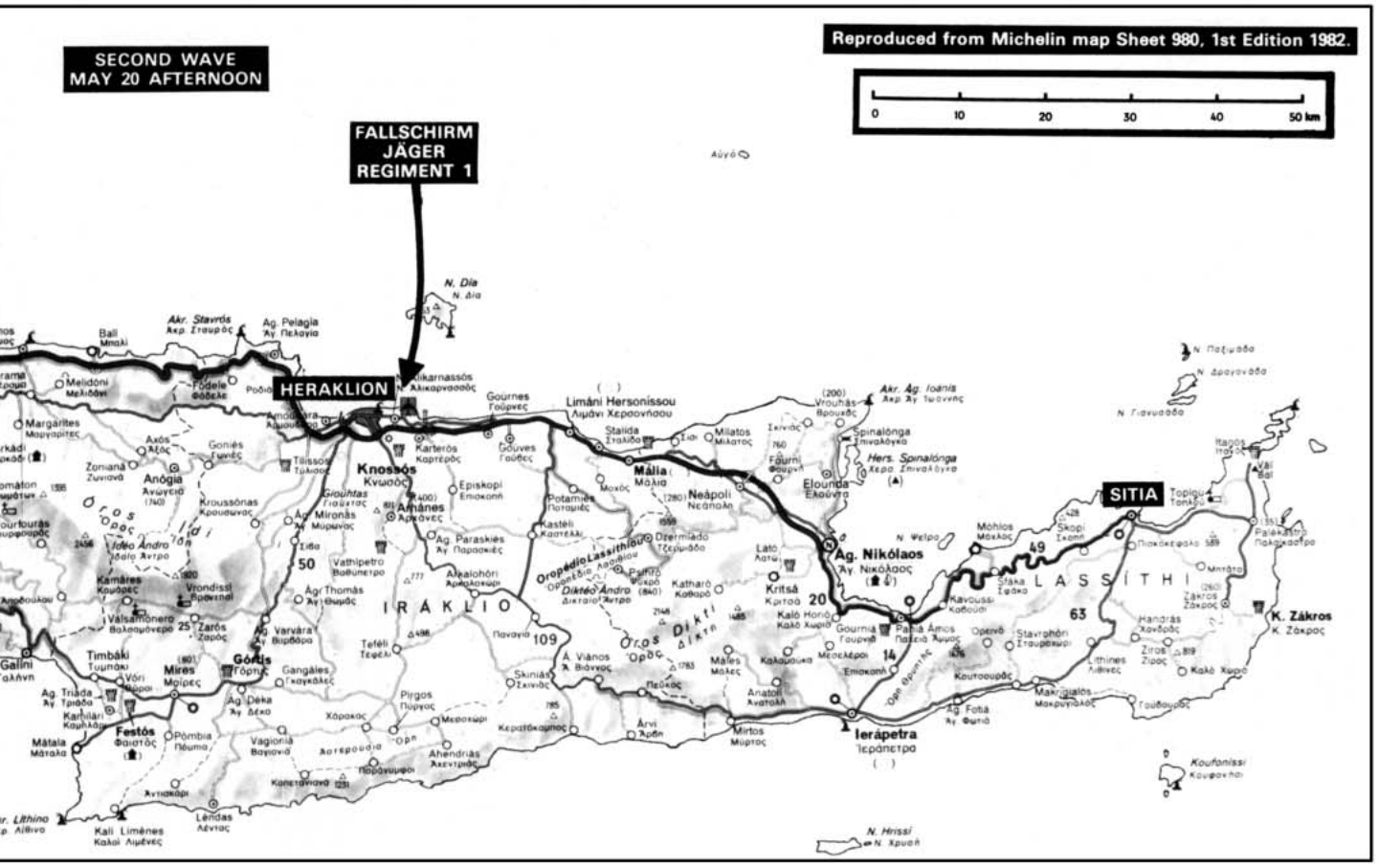
Luftlande-Sturmregiment. The second wave was to descend at H plus 8 hours on two other objectives: paratroops of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 dropping at Retimo and of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 at Heraklion. These forces, from about ten to eighty miles apart, were to link up as soon as possible. On the second day follow-up mountain troops were to be airlifted to the three airfields which were to have been taken on the first, while Admiral Schüster's convoys landed the bulk of them, plus heavy equipment and supplies, mostly at Heraklion (the greater part of 5. Gebirgs-Division, the panzer battalion and a motorcycle battalion) and Suda Bay but also at any minor ports open to shipping. Overhead, providing strong tactical support throughout the operation would be the bombers and fighters of VIII. Fliegerkorps.

(The initial commitment of the XI. Fliegerkorps in the Greek theatre had been that of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2, which had been moved into Bulgaria in March when an airborne invasion was envisaged against the island of Lemnos. As the Allied troops made for the beaches in Greece, the paratroops had been given the task of seizing intact the bridge over the Corinth Canal ahead of the vanguards of 20. Armee. A force of about 270 Ju 52 had assembled at Plovdiv in Bulgaria for maximum security and moved to its departure airfield at Larissa in Greece immediately prior to the assault; there each and every Ju 52 had to taxi to a central fuel dump where it was refuelled by handpump! The force took off at 4.00 a.m. on April 25 and arrived at their objective two hours later. A company of fallschirmpionier, under Leutnant Häffner, landed near the bridge in gliders and captured it while the regiment's I. Bataillon parachuted north of the bridge and the II. Bataillon south of it. Heavy fighting ensued, but the situation was evolving as planned when a lucky British artillery shell hit the bridge — or alternatively landed on an ammo dump — and brought it down although the demolition charges had been removed by the Germans. A temporary structure was built to fill the gap and the vanguards of the 20. Armee had crossed the canal on the morning of April 28.)

On May 1 the Transportverbände aircraft flew north to Czechosolvakia, Austria and Germany, where everything was set aside at all the maintenance depots to refit the Ju 52 transports. By May 15, 495 of them, completely overhauled and many with new power plants, had returned to the bases in the Athens area.

Just before the beginning of Operation 'Merkur' the islands of Kithira and Antikithira were seized to secure the approach routes to Crete and anti-aircraft batteries were hastily installed on both.

On Crete the allocation of British resources for the island's defence in the preceding months had to be taken into account alongside the other commitments of Middle East Command, and consequently only those



Prelude to the attack: the Luftwaffe strike at shipping in Suda (Soúda) Bay — a picture taken just south of the town. Photography authorised from this point. (IWM)

troops and what little equipment could be spared had been sent to the island. When the British Commander-in-Chief Middle East, General Sir Archibald Wavell, flew in from Egypt on April 30 he placed Major-General Bernard C. Freyberg, VC, who had been evacuated from Greece with his 2nd New Zealand Division, in command on the island over the recently arrived garrison commander, Major-General E. C. Weston, and sent the British commander of the forces that had fought in Greece, General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, to take command in Palestine. In setting about organising against the attack that he had been warned to expect, Freyberg lost no time in expressing his concern to GHQ in Cairo about his forces and the island's defences as being totally inadequate. Wavell's supportive response (though not on the subject of the shortage of fighter aircraft) was made in the light of the War Cabinet's determination that Crete must be held.

Freyberg had about 27,500 British and Dominion and 14,000 Greek troops on the eve of the German attack, which included the original garrison of some 5,000 men with their equipment. The troops evacuated from Greece, mainly belonging to the 2nd New Zealand Division and 6th Australian Division, had arrived tired and disorganised, with only the small arms they had managed to bring with them. Among the fresh units sent to reinforce the island were a battalion of infantry — the 2nd Leicesters — two squadrons of tanks from the 3rd Hussars and the 7th Royal Tank Regiment, and a troop of artillery. Freyberg disposed his ground forces under four area commands against airborne landings on the island's three airfields — Maleme, Retimo and Heraklion — and seaborne landings at Suda Bay and along the adjacent beaches. The eight medium tanks of B Squadron, 7th Royal Tank Regiment, and sixteen light tanks of C Squadron, 3rd Hussars, were distributed equally among these four commands — the strongest being the one holding the vital Maleme area.

The amount of air cover available on the island was paltry, some thirty-six aircraft at its peak, less than half of them operational. As the German preparatory air raids intensified, the unloading of the constantly arriving supply ships at Suda Bay could only be carried out under cover of darkness between the hours of 11.00 p.m. and 3.30 a.m. By the 19th — the day before the assault on the island — the few remaining Hurricanes and Gladiators which had not been either shot down or shot up on the ground, hopelessly outnumbered and without proper spares, were withdrawn to Egypt.

The Royal Navy had the crucial task of ensuring that no seaborne landings took place and of keeping open sea communications to enable the garrison on the island to be supplied and reinforced. The general plan of the Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, Admiral Sir Andrew B. Cunningham, was to employ three groups of light forces to sweep the sea approaches from Greece to Crete by night; they would retire to the south of the island by day. Part of the battle fleet would support the light forces from a position west of Crete, while the rest, including the aircraft carrier HMS *Formidable*, would be held in reserve in Alexandria.

As is now known, through the monitoring and decoding of German Enigma wireless traffic the British were well aware from Ultra intelligence intercepts of German intentions against Crete, and the defences were organised to counter an airborne assault, backed and supplied by sea. Churchill had signalled to Wavell that 'a heavy airborne attack by German troops and bombers will soon be made on Crete. Let me know what forces you have in the island and what your plans are. It ought to be a fine opportunity for killing the parachute troops!'

Freyberg informed Wavell: 'Have completed plan for defence of Crete and have just returned from final tour of defences. I feel greatly encouraged by my visit. Everywhere all ranks are fit and morale is high. All defences have been extended, and positions wired as much as possible. We have forty-five field guns placed, with adequate ammunition dumped. Two infantry tanks are at each aerodrome. Carriers and transport still being unloaded and delivered. 2nd Leicesters have arrived and will make Heraklion stronger. I do not wish to be over-confident, but I feel that at least we will give excellent acccount. With help of Royal Navy, I trust Crete will be held.'

The First Wave

MORNING OF MAY 20

Luftlande-Sturmregiment: Maleme airfield

The vanguards of Generalmajor Meindl's airborne assault regiment, elements of the I. Bataillon, landed their DFS 230 gliders west and south of the airfield at 7.15 a.m. The 3. Kompanie landed as planned at the mouth of the dried-up River Tavronitis and overran an anti-aircraft position but its commander, Oberleutnant Wulff von Plessen, was killed. The 4. Kompanie (Oberleutnant Kurt Sarrazin) and the battalion staff landed south of the airfield, on both sides of Hill 107, in the middle of positions held by the 22nd New Zealand Battalion; casualties were heavy, Oberleutnant Sarrazin being killed and the battalion commander himself, Major Walter Koch, being severely wounded. Stosstrupp Braun landed its nine gliders in loose formation within a few hundred yards of the Tavronitis bridge; under a hail of fire the air-landing troops assaulted and secured the bridge, also with heavy casualties, and their commander, Major Franz Braun of the Sturmregiment staff, was killed.

The other battalions of the Luftlande-

DFS 230 gliders of Stosstrupp Braun at Tavronitis bridge. The skill of the nine glider pilots is graphically illustrated in these pictures by the very close proximity of at least four of the touchdowns to the bridge. Major Franz Braun, the CO, was killed in the initial assault; now he lies in Maleme cemetery where the casualties from Operation Mercury are buried. Today, although a new bridge has been built just upstream, the original iron girder bridge still remains.

Sturmregiment parachuted simultaneously east and west of the Maleme area. The III. Bataillon (Major Otto Scherber), which was supposed to drop its 9. Kompanie just east of the airfield and the rest of the battalion all around the village of Maleme, became badly dispersed because of the wind. Some men landed in the sea but most of them fell in the middle of positions held by battalions of the 5th New Zealand Brigade, mainly of the 23rd Infantry Battalion. Losses were extremely heavy and the III. Bataillon was destroyed as a fighting unit within a few minutes. The 23rd Battalion's commander, Major D. F. Leckie, is said to have picked off five of them himself from the wadi in which his headquarters was located. The parachutists were greatly handicapped as they had to get to the containers dropped with them to recover weapons and ammunition, and the New Zealanders really slaughtered them. However, contrary to what has often been written, few of them were killed as they floated down, most being killed on the ground while removing their rigging or searching for the containers. A medical officer of the Luftlande-Regiment reported that relatively few of the dead had been found in their harnesses, which would have indicated their having been killed while still in the air. The sloping fields on which they had come down were soon littered with bodies: of the 600 or so who landed by parachute there on May 20, nearly 400 were killed during the first twenty-four hours; among them the battalion commander, Major Otto Scherber.

The IV. Bataillon, under Hauptmann Gericke, dropped without too much difficulty just west of Tavronitis. Its 16. Kompanie had dropped somewhat to the south to gain control of the Tavronitis valley and soon found itself up against bands of armed civilians.

The II. Bataillon, under Major Stentzler, which was intended as the regiment's reserve, parachuted as planned in the area just east of Spilia and encountered no opposition. One reinforced platoon which had been dropped further west under Leutnant Peter Mürbe near Kastelli came down among two battalions of Greek troops and large bands of armed civilians. The parachutists were almost annihilated, Leutnant Mürbe was killed, and the few survivors tried to resist under the command of Feldwebel Kroll. The odds were far too great and at about 11.00 a.m. the thirteen left had to surrender, their lives saved from summary execution by Major Bedding, the New Zealand officer in charge of the Kastelli sector. The bodies of the missing were found later, badly mutilated.

Generalmajor Meindl had parachuted with his regimental staff in the IV. Bataillon sector at 7.15 a.m. but Meindl was soon seriously wounded by a machine gun burst and tactical command of the regiment was assumed for a while by Major Stentzler, the commander of II. Bataillon.

Hard on the heels of the glider landing, the IV. Bataillon of the Luftlande-Sturmregiment parachuted into the Tavronitis area. The regimental commander, Generalmajor Eugen Meindl, was seriously wounded when he attempted to cross the bridge while it was under fire from British positions.

Hundreds of other paratroops of his regiment paid the ultimate price although few were killed like this fallschirmjäger while still in their parachutes. Numbers of those that were not decimated on landing by enemy fire were put to death by civilians in horrific circumstances. (Bundesarchiv)

This Matilda was abandoned just after 5.15 p.m. on the dried-up river bed — the bridge lies on the right. The crew were captured and its two-pounder gun turned round and used against the New Zealanders. (Bundesarchiv)

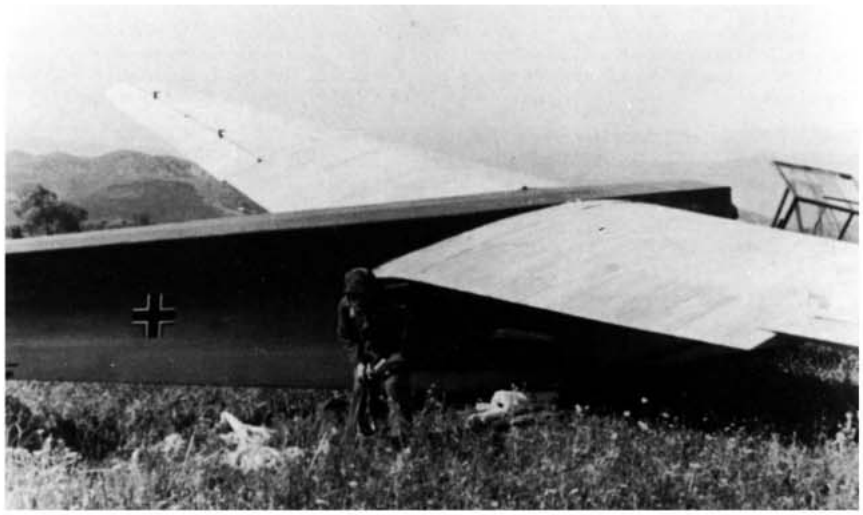
Ju 52s disgorge the paratroopers of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 around Canea, ten miles to the east of Maleme, on the morning of May 20. (Bundesarchiv)

Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 at Canea

A gliderborne assault by Kampfgruppe Altmann, comprising 1. and 2. Kompanie of the Luftlande-Sturmregiment, was to secure vital objectives near Canea while the paratroops of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 (Oberst Heidrich) dropped to the south-west of the town. Kampfgruppe Altmann — whose landing and assault was to be supported by twelve Me 109s and six Me 110s strafing the anti-aircraft batteries and the troops on the ground — achieved only very limited success. The reinforced 2. Kompanie, under the command of Hauptmann Altmann himself, landed on the southern part of the Akrotiri Peninsula north-east of Canea, in fifteen gliders, but things went wrong. Some of the batteries attacked turned out to be dummies but the area was held, notably by units of the Northumberland Hussars, and the venture ended in disaster: out of 136 men who had landed, 108 became casualties. Hauptmann Gustav Altmann (a hero of the attack in May 1940 on the Belgian fort of Eben-Emael — *see After the Battle No. 5* — for which he had been awarded the Knight's Cross) and two of his platoon commanders, Oberleutnant Möhr and Leutnant Rümmler, had been captured and a third platoon commander, Oberleutnant Ebner, killed. The 1. Kompanie, under the command of Oberleutnant Alfred Genz, less one platoon, landed south-east of Canea in nine gliders and succeeded in capturing the AA batteries; unable to link up with the other part of Kampfgruppe Altmann, the group withdrew southwards to join the paratroops who had dropped there. (Genz and another platoon commander, Oberleutnant Hans Toschka, were later to receive the Knight's Cross.)

The operation went badly for the paratroops of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 as most of them were much too widely scattered to form effective battle groups, some companies being spread out over a distance of about three miles. The defenders had been surprised but had reacted fiercely, severely mauling those that had dropped right into their positions, and in some places, such as at the edge of Galatas, nearly all were killed immediately they had reached the ground. The drop area was held by the 10th New Zealand Brigade (Lieutenant-Colonel H. K. Kippenberger) backed by three Greek battalions. Counting three battalions of the 4th New Zealand Brigade in position west of Canea and other miscellaneous units in the Canea-Suda sector, Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 had come down in a part of the countryside containing altogether about 15,000 men.

The I. Bataillon (Hauptmann von der Heydte) dropped to the south of the Alikianou-Canea road; they landed near their target but immediately found themselves under heavy fire. (Their drop was witnessed from a nearby house by King George II of Greece who made a hasty withdrawal to Alikianou; after two days and nights fleeing over the mountains the King and his party reached the coastal village of Roumeli with their British escort, and during the night of May 23-24 the King was taken off the island on the destroyer HMS *Decoy*.) The II. Bataillon (Major Derpa) landed north of the road, to the south-west of Galatas. Major Heilmann's III. Bataillon parachuted north-west of the village and found itself descending into the middle of determined opposition. The 13. Kompanie (heavy mortars) was dropped over a reservoir just north of Agia in which many of their number, including Oberleutnant Schimkat, the company commander, were drowned, and the survivors experienced extreme difficulty in recovering a few of the containers carrying the mortars. The Fallschirm-Pionier-Bataillon, under Major Liebach, dropped just north of Alikianou without too many problems. The combined efforts of the I. and II. Bataillon succeeded in securing Agia, and the prison there was turned into the headquarters of Oberst Heidrich and his regimental staff who had dropped to the south-west of the village. The staff of the 7. Flieger-Division had landed nearby in four gliders although the division's Chief-of-Staff, Major i.G. von Üxküll, had no idea why the division's commander was not there as planned; the reason being that at about 6.00 a.m. the DFS 230 carrying Generalleutnant Wilhelm Süssman had crashed on the island of Aegina, about nineteen miles south-west of Athens, when the towing line had broken some time after take-off. Süssman had been killed, together with



One of the ten-man DFS 230 gliders forms a ready-made backdrop for this posed shot taken after the battle. (Bundesarchiv)

This glider north-east of Canae (now Haniá) was most probably set on fire by British troops who overran this part of Kampfgruppe Altmann. (ECP Armées)

four other men. During the day Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 was unable to progress in the direction of Canea and the situation soon looked critical. Oberst Heidrich found his regiment surrounded by determined troops when he himself had fewer than a thousand men fit for battle.

By midday on May 20 none of the prime objectives assigned to the first wave had been secured: Luftlande-Sturmregiment had failed to take either Hill 107 or Maleme airfield and Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 3 was hemmed in around Agia in what was termed 'Prison Valley'; casualties had been heavy and numerous commanders were dead. On the Greek mainland, at the headquarters of XI. Fliegerkorps, nothing of this was known as communication with the troops on the island was practically non-existent. Only seven Ju 52 transports had been lost in the first drops and this, together with inaccurate reports by pilots, led General Student and his staff to think that the operation was going more or less according to plan. Problems with refuelling the aircraft, mostly by hand, delayed the second wave scheduled for the afternoon, on top of which the constant activity on the airfields stirred up huge dust clouds which further hindered operations and disrupted the time-table. Consequently the bombing and strafing attacks launched to open the way for the paratroop landings in fact took place long before the actual drops and thus served to warn the defenders of the paratroops' arrival; and because of the disruption the transport aircraft of the second wave were forced to take off and fly in small groups rather than en masse, and the drops followed suit.

Nearby was a common grave of five men from 2. Kompanie killed there on May 20: Feldwebel Röhrich, Gefreiter Schumi, Jäger Matzkowski, Jäger Mumm, Oberjäger Schultz and the pilot, Oberjäger Schupp. (ECP Armées) We found their graves in Block 3 at Maleme – Schumi in joint grave 530 and Matzkowski in 737.

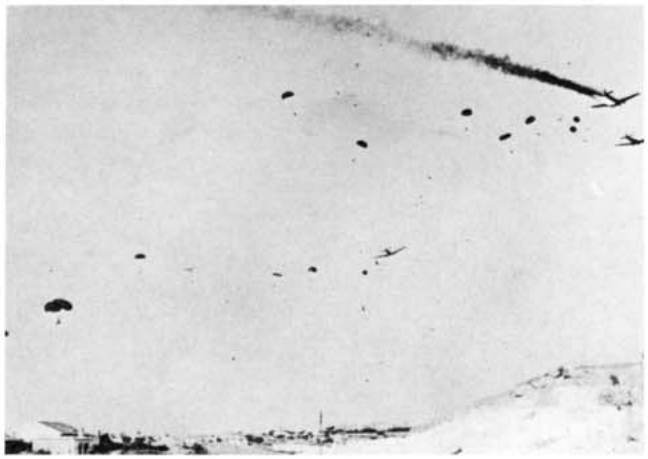
When large scale bombing of the defended areas began on May 13, British fighter aircraft were evacuated nightly from Maleme and Heraklion aerodromes to Retimo (Réthimno) although there were no anti-aircraft defences at the airfield. By the 19th, only four Hurricanes, three Gladiators and two Fulmars remained serviceable in Crete. That day one of the Hurricanes was shot down and the two Fulmars destroyed on the ground. Thereafter the remaining aircraft were flown to Egypt leaving the island without air cover. General Freyberg wanted to mine the aerodromes to prevent German landings but permission was refused as it was intended that the fighters should return as soon as possible. Today the former airfield at Retimo is no more, this photograph being taken from the vineyard-covered hill captured on May 20 by I. Bataillon of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2. Now all is at peace with nothing to indicate the bitter battle fought in this area forty-three years ago.

The Second Wave

Fallschim-Jäger-Regiment 2 at Retimo

Oberst Sturm's Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2, minus most of its II. Bataillon which had been assigned for the attack at Heraklion, took off at about 1.30 p.m. Its landing at Retimo, from about 3.00 p.m. onwards, on a sector held by elements of the 19th Australian Brigade, was far from successful: some troops were dropped in the wrong place; rocky ground resulted in many injuries; the men were scattered; and heavy fire from the defenders — two Australian and four Greek battalions, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel I. R. Campbell — practically pinned the paratroops down. The I. Bataillon (Major Kroh) dropped just east of the airfield and succeeded in capturing the vineyard-covered hill which overlooked it, but it proved simply impossible to take the airfield itself and the paratroops dug in. The III. Bataillon (Hauptmann Wiedemann) found itself in the same situation at the eastern edge of Retimo and did the same. Between these two groups the regimental staff had parachuted in with a company of men. The ambitious and well-planned attack on Retimo had turned out to consist of small groups holding all-round positions and waiting either to be overrun by counter-attacks or to be relieved by a back-up force. Too few in number to carry out any offensive action, the capture of the airfield far beyond their means, they might well have regarded holding out until relieved as constituting a victory in itself.

Losses at Retimo were considerable. Here prisoners from Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 line a street in the town on May 21, amongst them their commander Oberst Alfred Sturm. (IWM)



The battle of Heraklion — part one. Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 dropped into a maelstrom of defensive fire — this well-known cine sequence shows 6. and 7. Kompanies dropping just west of the aerodrome; they were wiped out to a man. Parachutists continue to fall from the burning Ju 52 — note the four parachutes supporting a piece of heavy equipment. (IWM)

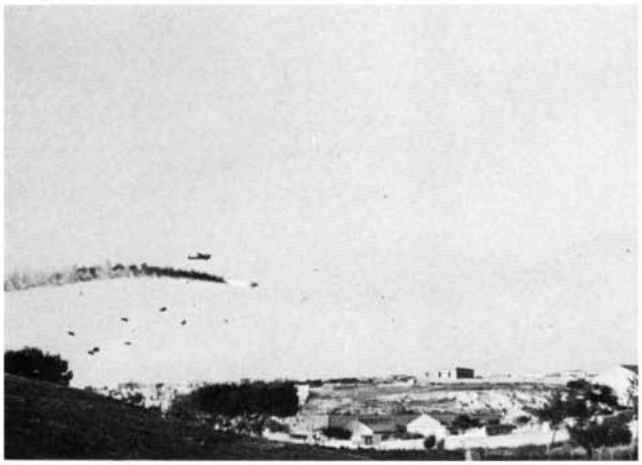
Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 at Heraklion

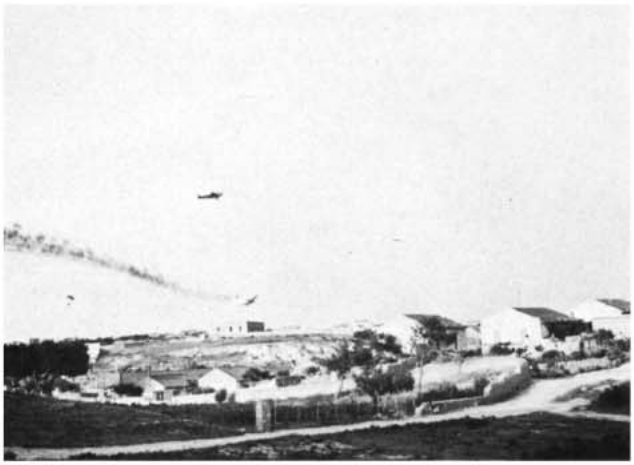
The regiment dropped at Heraklion, its objectives being the capture of the town and the airfield two and a half miles to the east, which were hopefully to be taken before nightfall. The I. Bataillon (Major Walther) parachuted east of the town in the Vathianos-Gournes area, together with the regimental staff and its commander, Oberst Bräuer. The II. Bataillon (Hauptmann Burkhardt) landed near the airfield, both west and south of it, while Major Schulz's III. Bataillon landed just west of the town itself. Further west, in the Gazi-Ammoudara sector, two companies landed under Hauptmann Schirmer from the II. Bataillon of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2, subordinated to Bräuer's regiment. Waiting for them, the 14th Infantry Brigade was firmly established around Heraklion under the command of Brigadier Chappel. Again it was the same story of dispersion and determined defence, and the 6. and 7. Kompanie which had been dropped, under the command of Hauptmann Dunz, just west of the airfield, were wiped out almost to a man, with only five managing to evade capture by swimming out to sea. Things were not so bad for the other companies but the situation was far from satisfactory and most of them were widely scattered. Bräuer knew he could not take the airfield that day as planned and the night had to spent in attempting to contact and co-ordinate the various elements. Although the general situation was less gloomy, Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 found itself in much the same position as its neighbour near Retimo.

In Athens, by the evening of May 20 General Student and the XI. Fliegerkorps staff had pieced together a clearer picture of the true situation on the island from wireless signals which had come through, and it looked none too good. Gruppe West had obtained a foothold near Maleme but had taken neither the airfield nor the vital Hill 107, and although the paratroops had launched an attack in the afternoon this had halted in the face of a counter-thrust led by two British tanks supported by heavy machine gun fire. Gruppe Mitte had failed too, at Canea, and at Retimo where elements of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 were in a critical situation; and Gruppe Ost had failed to gain either Heraklion or the airfield there. A flotilla of some twenty-five boats which was to have landed reinforcements at Heraklion that

Jean Paul established that the film had been taken looking from a vantage point behind this outcrop on the eastern side of the town. The rock remains although overgrown and crowded in with buildings.

The grave of Theo Klier — then and now. An Oberjäger within the staff of I. Bataillon, Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1, he fell near the airfield of Heraklion on May 22. Now buried at Maleme, Block 1, Grave 637. (ECP Armées)





evening had been delayed and would not be ready before the following day. Even then there was no guarantee of a successful landing.

After due deliberation it was accepted that the perimeter held near Maleme, tenuous or not, was the one position which could be exploited. Student therefore decided to switch the effort west and concentrate on Maleme. The 5. Gebirgs-Division, earmarked for employment in the Heraklion sector by Gruppe Ost, was ordered to Maleme and the new plan was to roll-up the British and Dominion positions from the west. By deciding to stake everything on one card, as Student later put it, he was taking quite a gamble, but fortunately no counter-attack in strength materialised during the night and the best chance of routing the airborne assault was lost by a numerically superior Freyberg. Whatever the reasons for the 5th New Zealand Brigade's commander, Brigadier J. Hargest, not mounting a prompt, all-out counter-attack at Maleme (possibly because he felt that his battalions were holding their own, and in order to remain prepared for the expected attack from the sea), the failure to move rapidly and with force against the Maleme foothold was to shape the course of future events on Crete.

How many of us have wondered, when watching this piece of cine film included in numerous wartime documentaries, just where this Ju 52 came down?

The countryside looked pretty open in 1941 . . . but just look at it today! The cameraman has just turned round to face north-east. No chance of finding relics from the crash as the whole area has been built over. The flat building to the left of the smoke column today is under the three towers of the church in the picture below. (To find the spot where the film was taken, follow the signs to the Hotel Aris.)

MAY 21

At GHQ Cairo at dawn on May 21, Wavell received the following message sent to him by Freyberg the night before: 'Today has been a hard one. We have been hard pressed. So far, I believe we hold aerodromes at Retimo, Heraklion and Maleme and the two harbours. Margin by which we hold them is a bare one, and it would be wrong of me to paint an optimistic picture. Fighting has been heavy and we have killed large numbers of Germans. Communications are most difficult. Scale of air attacks on Canea has been severe. Everybody here realises vital issue and we will fight it out.'

Meanwhile, Student's new plan was getting under way, as he committed his available reserves of about 550 men to reinforce Gruppe West at Maleme. About 300 were dropped north of Tavronitis that morning and the rest just east of Maleme during the afternoon — while at about 8.00 a.m. elements of the Luftlande-Sturmregiment had captured Hill 107. The co-ordination of the various units was fairly good in spite of Generalmajor Meindl having been wounded, for all the regiment's officers had been carefully briefed prior to the operation and were able to act on their own initiative according to the main outlines of the plan. Oberleutnant Josef Barmetler (commander of 7. Kompanie), Hauptmann Walter Gericke (commander of the IV. Bataillon), Oberleutnant Horst Trebes (who assumed command of what was left of the III. Bataillon after the death of its commander) and Oberstabsartz Heinrich Neumann (who took over what was left of the I. Bataillon after its commander, Major Koch, had been wounded) were all to receive the Knight's Cross to the Iron Cross for their actions that day.

The capture of the vital Hill 107 had in fact been facilitated by orders issued during the previous day's fighting by the commander of the 22nd New Zealand Infantry Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel L. W. Andrew, a VC of the First World War — orders which were to

The capture of Crete's three airfields was the key to the successful reinforcement of the paratroops whose numbers had been so drastically reduced by the defenders. After weighing up the operation's progress, once Generalleutnant Student had made up his mind to concentrate on the one at Maleme he sent Hauptmann Kleye, a 'bold dare-devil' pilot, in a Ju 52 to try to attempt a landing shortly after 8.00 a.m. on May 21. Despite being under enemy fire, Kleye managed to land and, before successfully taking off again, he established that Hill 107 overlooking the airfield was in German hands. This paved the way for the transports to begin the reinforcement as Kleye reported that the western end of the drome lay in dead ground. A steady stream of Ju 52s began arriving at 4.00 p.m. but, with the airfield still swept by artillery fire, losses began to mount up, other aircraft piling into those that were blocking the field in the confusion. Only by using captured enemy tanks to clear the wreckage were the Germans able to establish some sort of order. In this picture burned out and damaged aircraft ring the airfield. (ECP Armées)

Today entry to the airfield is forbidden although its strategic importance appears limited to being the base of a crop-spraying biplane!

have an incalculable effect on the entire Crete operation. Mistakenly thinking that his three forward companies had been overwhelmed, he had directed the other two — A and B — to pull back, and the weary paratroops were thus able to overcome what was left of a confused defence. With the hill in German hands, the way was now open for them to gain control of Maleme airfield.

At about 2.30 p.m. a German air-strike against the New Zealand positions east of the airfield immediately preceded the air-drop of the rest of the reserves — 4. and 12. Kompanie of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 and a third company, under the command of Oberleutnant Klein, made up of various members of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2.

Aided by the day's arrivals, the weary III. Bataillon finally overran the airfield defences, gaining a grip on the objective, although even while it was still being contested and swept by machine gun fire, a solitary Ju 52 brought off a daring landing and taxied to the German-held south end of the strip without being shot to pieces. Ammunition boxes were unloaded, a few seriously wounded were taken aboard, and the dare-devil pilot was off again!

With the airfield still under artillery fire, the first Ju 52 bringing in mountain troop reinforcements touched down at Maleme at about 4.00 p.m. The tiny airfield could not cope with such a large volume of traffic, let alone while shells rained down all over the place, and the situation rapidly became chaotic. Transports were piled everywhere, some having collided with each other, and the wreckage of these and other Ju 52s struck by artillery fire was hastily pushed aside to clear the runway while others kept on touching down into an inferno of exploding shells and burning aircraft. Losses in men were acceptable in relation to those of aircraft, which were high. By evening Oberst Utz, the commander of the Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100, was in Maleme with his staff, and the reinforcement of the Maleme sector included some 650 of the mountain troops. Around 6.00 p.m. Oberst Ramcke landed at Maleme to take command of Gruppe West and began at once to reorganise.

To the paratroops' surprise and relief they were not called on to face a heavy, concentrated counter-attack of the kind they most feared. For the New Zealand counter-attack planned for that night by just the 20th and 28th Battalions, only two companies of the 20th arrived in time and it was four hours late in starting: the furthest advances had eventually to be given up and no vital ground was gained. Thus another opportunity passed for the island's defenders of gaining the upper hand.

This chapel on a hill to the west of the airfield became a strong point for Hauptmann Weidemann's III. Bataillon of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2.

To the east the situation of Gruppe Mitte near Retimo and Gruppe Ost near Heraklion remained serious. Near Retimo the two battalions of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 found themselves facing some 7,000 Allied soldiers : a determined attack by Australian troops had forced back Major Kroh's battalion from where it had dug in on a hill controlling the airfield, and the paratroops had dug in further east around an olive oil factory. West of the airfield the situation was the same for Hauptmann Wiedemann's III. Bataillon which was obliged to dig in near Perivolia just east of the town. For several days the Germans were to hold out vigorously in these pockets in the face of heavy artillery shelling and repeated attacks, some of these supported by armour.

Near Heraklion Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 had consolidated during the night and in the morning started moving towards their objectives. The attack rapidly came to a standstill and the paratroops soon learnt that they were facing over 8,000 men, backed by artillery. Major Schulz succeeded in fighting his way into the streets of Heraklion with some of his men but their situation became more and more difficult as ammunition ran out . . . whereupon a group of Greek civilians and a Greek officer, the Greek commander of Heraklion, approached him and offered to surrender the town! Major Schulz wasted no time and dictated the surrender terms which were translated into Greek by the group's interpreter, while the Greek officer nodded 'at every comma and full stop'. The pencilled document signed, Schulz dismissed the Greeks but soon discovered that the British did not recognise the agreement, counter-attacking and pushing the paratroops out of the town. The following day the Germans rejected an invitation to surrender, with the words: 'The German Army has been ordered to take the island. It will carry out this order'.

Vital to the defence of the airfield was Hill 107 which overlooked the aerodrome. Defended stoutly on the first day by the New Zealanders, today it marks the last resting place of the many Germans who died in the attempt to capture it. The German war cemetery was inaugurated in 1974 and contains the remains of 4,465 servicemen who died on Crete.

Small caiques, one flying a Swastika ensign, another the Reichskriegsflagge (the German War Flag), on their masts, of the type used in the abortive attempt to reinforce the island. (ECP Armées)

The Failure of the Seaborne Reinforcement

MAY 21-22

For the seaborne support intended to augment the air landings an improvised flotilla had been hastily put together from sixty-three requisitioned vessels to carry part of the 5. Gebirgs-Division to the island — there being not enough aircraft to carry out both the initial assault and the rapid build-up of the operation. Most of these commandeered vessels were caiques — fishing boats dependent upon a huge sail supplemented by a weak auxiliary engine. One flotilla of twenty-five boats was to embark 2,250 mountain troops and bring them to Maleme on the evening of the first day, to be followed by another flotilla of thirty-eight which was to carry 4,000 men to Heraklion. Although the departure of the second flotilla was delayed, the first flotilla left the harbour of Piraeus on May 19 as planned and by nightfall the following day had reached the island of Milos and anchored there, some eighty miles north of Crete.

On May 21, after the original plan had been changed and Student made Maleme the main point of effort, both convoys were ordered to sail to the Maleme sector. At dawn that day the first flotilla left Milos, but Konteradmiral Schüster decided to recall it as it was learnt that a British light naval force was patrolling the waters north of Crete. However by 9.00 a.m. the way ahead was considered safe and it was ordered to set out again for Maleme. During the day, while the convoy laboured along at no more than about 7 knots, Italian planes flying from Rhodes and Stukas based on the island of Skarpanto made repeated attacks on British ships. To the south-east of Crete the destroyer *Juno*, part of a force under the command of Rear-Admiral E. L. S. King, was sunk just after noon and the *Kingston* sustained minor damage, and in another force to the south-west (Rear-Admiral I. H. S. Glennie) the cruiser *Ajax* was slightly damaged by near misses.

It was at about 11.00 p.m., after the flotilla had rounded Cape Spada, when in the darkness it was suddenly confronted by Admiral Glennie's force, then comprising the cruisers *Dido*, *Orion* and *Ajax* and the destroyers *Kimberley*, *Hasty*, *Hereward* and *Janus*. The *Lupo* (Capitano di Corvetta Francesco Mimbelli), a small Italian torpedo boat escorting the convoy, raised full steam and bravely headed for the British squadron with her comparatively puny firepower — her main armament consisting of three 3.9-inch guns. Under the 6-inch guns of the cruisers and 4.7-inch guns of the destroyers, the *Lupo* was soon stricken, swung away out of control and turned back towards the convoy, fresh salvoes coming at her. The damage hastily repaired, she courageously returned to the fight, vainly trying to draw the warships' fire onto herself in order to cover the escape of the ships she was escorting before managing to get away herself. For two and a half hours the Royal Navy hunted the caiques down, sending most of them to the bottom, until first light and concern about being spotted by the Luftwaffe caused Glennie's ships, now very low on anti-aircraft ammunition, to turn away to the west in order to join up with a force commanded by Rear-Admiral H. B. Rawlings before being ordered back to Alexandria for re-ammunitioning.

The second flotilla had just set sail southwards from Milos on May 22 when at about 9.30 a.m. it came within range of the guns of the cruisers *Naiad*, *Perth*, *Calcutta* and *Carlisle* and the destroyers *Kandahar*, *Nubian* and *Kingston*, under the command of Admiral King. It was daylight this time with the first Luftwaffe aircraft shortly overhead and, under mounting air attack, Admiral King broke off the engagement and turned away, hoping to also rendezvous with Admiral Rawlings, who instead had to come to King's aid. The second flotilla was nonetheless recalled to Piraeus to spare it from a similar fate to the first, and no further seaborne operations were attempted by the Germans until the outcome of the fighting on the island was assured.

The mountain troops had paid dearly for the failure of the reinforcement by sea, the III. Bataillon of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 having virtually disappeared as a fighting unit. The 5. Gebirgs-Division reported 506 missing, including 18 officers, in the Crete campaign, most of whom had gone down with the caiques. Some paratroops had been embarked too, and among those that were drowned was Leutnant Häffner who had led the landing in Greece to seize the Corinth bridge a month before. Some 178 survivors were picked up from the water by air-sea rescue planes; another 64 were saved by launches; a few successfully struggled ashore. The war diary of the 5. Gebirgs-Division proudly recorded the arrival of a group of such men who had managed to reach land, almost naked and suffering badly from exposure, but still carrying their weapons.

May 22 saw the Luftwaffe unleash an all-out effort against the Royal Navy and in the course of the day the VIII. Fliegerkorps took a heavy toll of ships of the Mediterranean Fleet. From dawn onwards the pilots eagerly sought out and struck at the ships below, returning to the attack again after re-fuelling, re-ammunitioning and re-loading with bombs. Before Admiral King's force was attacked south of Milos, the first ships to have been spotted were the cruisers *Gloucester* and *Fiji* twenty-five miles north of Canea while they were withdrawing westward to successfully join Admiral Rawlings's force. By the end of the day both ships and the destroyer *Greyhound* had been sunk, and the battleships *Warspite* and *Valiant* and the cruisers *Naiad* and *Carlisle* damaged. Bombed and harried by the Luftwaffe, the Royal Navy could no longer operate in the Aegean Sea or near Crete during daylight.

MAY 22

When May 22 dawned, the worst phase of the battle for Crete was by then over for the Germans, although at the time this was not apparent to Hitler and his advisers, who were dismayed at the losses of the first two days and would not allow any mention of the Crete landings to be made in the press or on the radio for another couple of days. The air shuttle of the mountain troops proceeded in the same hectic fashion as the previous day, with thick dust clouds and resupply difficulties hampering the operation at the airfields on the mainland and the transports landing at Maleme under artillery fire amidst the wreckage of others, some still burning. Reinforcements and supplies kept pouring in regardless, and by midday the whole of the I. Bataillon of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 had been brought in, followed in the afternoon by the first elements of the II. Bataillon, the I. Bataillon of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 85 and then the Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon 95 under Major Schaette. The divisional commander, Generalmajor Julius Ringel, flew in and assumed command of all forces in the Maleme area, organising his available strength into three battle groups: Kampfgruppe Schaette was to protect the Maleme area from any threat from the west and push westwards to capture Kastelli; the second made up of the paratroops under the command of Oberst Ramcke was to strike northwards to the sea to protect the airfield and then extend eastwards along the coast; and the third, commanded by Oberst Utz, was to move eastwards into the mainland, partly with a flanking movement through the mountains.

MAY 23

While supplies and troops continued to be flown in, the three battle groups started forward: I. Bataillon, Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 85, led the move eastwards of Kampfgruppe Utz and in the afternoon reached the village of Modi, where the advance stopped in the face of a tenacious defence put up by the New Zealanders. The I. Bataillon, Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100, had outflanked the position by a march through the mountains to the south and the village soon fell, although the defenders put up a series of counter-attacks in the hope of driving the Germans back before they could consolidate their gains. The possession of Hill 259, a dominant feature near Modi, was essential to the next phase of the battle and the mountain troops of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 attacked it. The New Zealand positions were well sited and camouflaged and the position fell only in the late evening after fierce man-to-man fighting as attack and counter-attack followed one another at bayonet point on the bare slopes. With the Germans threatening Platanias, the left flank of the 5th New Zealand Brigade was to a large extent turned and there was no alternative for the New Zealanders other than to pull back to avoid being cut off. During the night the artillery west of Platanias moved back south-east of the town and as a result Maleme airfield was no longer dominated by their fire.

On the west of the island Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon 95 had progressed towards Kastelli and reported hard fighting that day against armed civilians, including women and children. These bands had carried out frightful atrocities on wounded and dead Germans alike: eyes had been plucked out, sexual organs mutilated, and men had suffered appalling torture before dying. (East of Maleme the III. Bataillon of Luftlande-Sturmregiment had suffered badly from such incidents, especially during the first night on the ground when Cretan partisans had mutilated all the dead and wounded they could find — altogether about 135 men of the battalion being put to death.) Subsequently the Germans announced that for every soldier killed in this fashion ten Cretans would be shot in reprisal, and the Luftwaffe dropped leaflets warning the population of the measures that would be taken against partisan activity.

Throughout a day of concentrating and regrouping the various knots of scattered paratroops in Gruppe West's sector, supplies were brought forward and fresh troops were landed on the island at Maleme. Every hour about twenty aircraft came in, some of them carrying artillery, anti-tank guns and other heavy equipment. Among the units now at hand was the II. Bataillon of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 — of which the latter part had landed in the morning — sent eastwards to support Kampfgruppe Utz, and two companies of Kradschützen-Battalion 55 which had been ordered to strike for the south coast and secure Paleohora.

THE THREE VICTORIA CROSSES OF CRETE

The first Victoria Cross of the Crete campaign was posthumously awarded to Petty Officer Alfred Sephton of the Royal Navy. Whilst serving as gun director on HMS Coventry on May 18 he was grieviously wounded in the back by machine gun fire as the Coventry went to the aid of the hospital ship Aba, being dive-bombed by Stukas just off the Crete coast. Despite his injuries, Sephton continued to direct the ship's gunfire until the aircraft were driven off. He was carried to the sick bay where in the words of his citation 'thereafter until his death his valiant and cheerful spirit gave heart to the wounded. His example inspired his shipmates and will live in their memory.' After the death of his parents, the award passed into the care of his elder sister, Mrs Eva Bull. Offered £2,000 for the medal, instead she gave it to Coventry Cathedral. As Mrs Bull later commented, 'Money does not buy honour.'

Clive Hulme was a provost sergeant with the 23rd New Zealand Battalion Field Punishment Centre in the village of Modhion between Canae and Maleme. When the first parachutists drifted down orders were given to issue the prisoners with rifles and they were taken to join the battalion. During the next eight days, Sergeant Hulme's exploits made him a legend in his own lifetime. He freed a party of his countrymen being held prisoner and played a conspicuous part in a charge at Galatas wiping out a German position in a school with grenades. The news that his brother had been killed led him to even greater efforts to avenge his death as he roamed the battlefield stalking and striking at enemy paratroopers, officers, snipers or any other Germans he came across. His total of confirmed enemy killed amounted to thirty-three, his citation recording outstanding leadership, initiative, skill, endurance and most conspicuous gallantry.

The name of Second Lieutenant Charles Upham will live long in the annals of military history as the only serviceman to be awarded two VCs in the Second World War. As a member of the New Zealand 20th Battalion, Upham led the 15th Platoon in C Company, during the advance to recapture Maleme airfield. Eliminating an enemy machine gun emplacement single-handed with grenades was just the first of many actions which earned him the award. He was wounded in the shoulder and foot but continued to fight right up until the evacuation at Sphakia where Upham was jointly responsible for eliminating a German force of fifty attempting to infiltrate the area. His second Victoria Cross was awarded the following year during the attack on El Ruweisat Ridge in the Western Desert in which he was wounded several times and taken prisoner. His was only the third double VC since the award was founded in 1856.

This sequence depicts an attack being launched on Suda from the heights south of the town. The photographs have the feeling of being staged but nevertheless are excellent shots of fallschirmjägers in action. (ECP Armées)

A new dual carriageway road now crosses the spot making an exact comparison impossible.

These pictures were most probably taken during the latter stages of the battle, portraying as they do XI. Fliegerkorps headquarters. However, like all photographs taken by German cameramen on Crete, they are devoid of captions which were lost at the end of the war. The only clue as to the location is the words 'Bella Campagna' on the wall behind the sentries. Jean Paul realised it must be somewhere in the Canae area but the locals misunderstood his French accent and thought he had asked for directions to Pelekapina. Having almost reached Perivolia, with no sign of the mystery house, he turned the car round. Driving away quite disappointed, suddenly, quite by chance, there it stood, virtually unchanged!

The Deciding Phase

MAY 24-MAY 26:

The battle on the island was well under way when the Oberkommando der Wehrmacht released news of Operation 'Merkur' on May 24 with the announcement that 'Deutsche Fallschirmjäger und Luftlandetruppen stehen seit den frühen Morgenstunden des 20 Mai auf des Insel Kreta im Kampf gegen Teile des britischen Heeres' — 'German paratroopers and airborne troops have been battling against part of the British army on the island of Crete since the early morning of May 20'.

With more and more troops being airlifted in at Maleme, hour after hour, Generalmajor Ringel was able to regroup. While Kampfgruppe Utz, backed by Ramcke's and Heidrich's paratroops, was to attack Galatas, the key to capturing Canea, another battle group was organised and given the task of marching fifty miles in a flanking movement across the high ground to the south in order to cut the Canea-Retimo road east of Suda. Oberst Krakau, the commander of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 85, was to lead this formation, his regimental staff and III. Bataillon being brought in on the 24th, with elements of II. Bataillon arriving on the 25th. During the night of the 24th-25th, Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 gained contact with the western part of Oberst Heidrich's paratroops surrounded in the Prison Valley since their landing on the morning of the 20th. To the west the Gebirgs-Pionier-Bataillon 95 had entered Kastelli after Stukas had dive-bombed the town.

South-west of Canae on the 25th the German lines comprised Oberst Ramcke's paratroops on the left flank along the coastline; in the centre Kampfgruppe Utz with two battalions of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100; and on the right the paratroops of Oberst Heidrich's regiment which had been incorporated into the line after its relief. Around Galatas that afternoon fierce hand-to-hand fighting raged between the mountain troops and New Zealanders of the 10th New Zealand Brigade; thrust and counterthrust being punctuated by the scream of Stukas and the crash of artillery shells. The Germans succeeded in forcing their way into the village,

Although the 'fog of war' affected the decisions of the commanders of both sides, Student suffered even more so in the early stages being nearly 200 miles away. Paratroop losses were frightful, but Maleme on May 21 was the turning point; by the 24th Freyberg had abandoned all hope of holding Crete and the decision to evacuate was taken three days later.

only to be thrown out by a counter-attack launched by two companies of infantry of the 23rd Battalion, 5th New Zealand Brigade, backed by two tanks of the 3rd Hussars under Lieutenant Roy Farran. Next morning (May 26) the mountain troops re-entered the village after the New Zealanders had withdrawn during the night. The streets were littered with corpses — paratroops, mountain troops, New Zealanders — but this was a decisive German victory and the road to Canea was open.

Kampfgruppe Krakau had assembled near Alikianou and started moving east through very difficult mountainous terrain. Air-ground co-ordination failed in these conditions and at 1.10 p.m. on May 26 a flight of Dornier bombers attacked the I. Bataillon by mistake despite Swastika flags having been laid out and the firing of white flares. The attack lasted for the best part of an hour and, although no casualties were suffered, it was the sort of thing which, on top of the exertions of the march, did nothing to enhance the morale of the troops.

In come the cavalry! The II. Bataillon of the Luftlande-Sturmregiment adopted the local, most efficient form of transport for their grand entry into Canae. (Bundesarchiv)

MAY 27

Late on May 26 Freyberg had cabled Wavell: I regret to have to report that in my opinion the limit of endurance has been reached by the troops under my command here at Suda Bay. No matter what decision is taken by the Commanders-in-Chief, from a military point of view our position here is hopeless. A small, ill-equipped and immobile force such as ours cannot stand up against the concentrated bombing that we have been faced with during the last seven days. I feel I should tell you that from an administrative point of view the difficulties of extricating this force in full are insuperable. Provided a decision is reached at once, a certain proportion of the force might be embarked.' On May 27 the decision to evacuate the island was taken and the troops started to get ready and to withdraw southwards during the afternoon, though for some time the Germans failed to recognise the retreat for what it was.

Generalmajor Ringel pressed the attack and threw more troops against Canea that

Canae has fallen. Few tourists in June 1941 compared with high summer in 1984.

day, deploying a battle group comprising two batallions of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 141 (6. Gebirgs-Division), one of which had arrived on the 25th and the other on the 26th, under the regiment's commander, Oberst Jais, on the right of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100. In front of Canea, against continuing determined opposition, the mountain troops overcame a British force and by afternoon the Gerbirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 had penetrated the town. To the south-west of Suda vanguards of the Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 141 held fast against determined and repeated New Zealand and Australian counter-attacks — rearguard actions, in fact, aimed at holding the Germans back while the main body of the troops withdrew southwards towards Sphakia and the ships of the Royal Navy. When the Germans finally entered Canae and Suda Bay, they found the area deserted.

Further south, Kampfgruppe Krakau had toiled through the mountains to pull off its flanking movement and on the evening of May 27 occupied the heights west of Stilos.

When the mountain troops approached Stilos at about 6.30 a.m. on May 28 they came under heavy fire from a blocking position held by the 23rd New Zealand Battalion, backed by artillery and tanks, and determined not to let them get to the vital Suda-Sphakia road. Fierce fighting erupted around Stilos while vanguards, bypassing a delaying force to the north, captured intact and removed the explosive charges from the bridge on the main coastal road just south of Kalami — a bridge whose possession was vital for the intended pursuit eastwards. The Germans were pinned down for a while near Stilos but the arrival of anti-tank grenade riflemen and of the artillery man-handling their disassembled guns and mortars turned the situation in their favour once the artillery assembled their weapons and started to plaster the defenders' positions and the anti-tank teams began stalking the tanks, firing at the lightly armoured flanks and suspensions and quickly immobilising them. Within two and a half hours it was decided that the 5th New Zealand and 19th Australian Brigades would have to withdraw southwards. Covering the retreat, the rearguard operations were well executed, seeking to gain time for the evacuation by sea.

Late on May 27 Generalmajor Ringel ordered a force formed under Oberstleutnant Wittmann, the commander of the Gebirgs-Artillerie-Regiment 95, to advance east 'to pursue the retreating enemy and to move as quickly as possible towards Retimo and Heraklion to relieve the paratroops cut off there'. Their situation was still serious. At Retimo the 250 or so paratroops who had dug in east of the airfield had slipped away under the cover of darkness during the night of May 25-26 in order to join those west of Heraklion (although within twenty-four hours they had been ordered instead to establish a defensive position to pin down enemy forces east of Retimo). Reconnaissance aircraft had reported that a few British planes had returned to Heraklion airfield and that reinforcements were arriving by sea on the eastern part of the island. Any return of British aircraft to the island had to be prevented if the Luftwaffe was to keep control of the skies over the battlefield, and it was therefore decided to reinforce by all possible means the elements of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 still surrounded near Heraklion so that Oberst Bräuer could in fact capture the airfield and prevent the landing of British aircraft until relieved by the advance of forces from the west. During the night of May 25-26 Kampfgruppe Schulz — the regiment's units west of the town — had proceeded to move eastwards, bypassing the town to the south, and had linked up with the bulk of the regiment south of the airfield. Several British positions had been taken, among them the vital Hill 134 which overlooked the strip. Supplies continued to be dropped to the surrounded units, while on May 24 two companies of reinforcements for Braüer which had been hastily assembled at Maleme were dropped west of Heraklion, and two more on May 27 to the east.

This is the spot where the first crater was blown in the road leading out of Suda towards Retimo. Kampfgruppe Wittmann was held up here on May 28 but by the time this picture was taken German engineers had repaired the breach. (Bundesarchiv) Today all is camouflaged by heavy undergrowth. Another area where photography is technically forbidden.

The Pursuit Eastwards

MAY 28-MAY 30

The forward troops of Kampfgruppe Wittmann moved out from the battle group's assembly area near Platanias at 3.50 a.m. on May 28 and advanced unchecked until just under two miles outside Suda where the road was cut in two places by craters. Using all available means the road was reopened and at about 9.00 a.m. the advance eastwards resumed, only to be stopped about five miles further on at a roadblock held by a company of Layforce (a British commando unit which had been landed at Suda on the nights of the 23rd and 26th) and two companies of the 28th New Zealand Battalion — part of the rearguard then fighting near Stilos against Kampfgruppe Krakau — on the heights running parallel to the road just west of Kalami. A flanking attack was mounted while mortars, anti-tank and mountain guns opened fire against the defenders. Resistance was overcome at about midday, contact was gained near Stilos with elements of Kampfgruppe Krakau and the pursuit continued without interference (the 5th New Zealand

On May 30 these wounded paratroopers were pictured at Retimo just after their liberation by vanguards of Kampfgruppe Wittmann.

Jean Paul apologises for his comparison. Although this is the exact spot, and the women on the beach have mostly been liberated, he regrets that he failed to encourage a 'splendid young lady to be outstanding with a gorgeous forefront'.

and 19th Australian Brigades having withdrawn) as far as the crossroads west of Kaina. Here the vanguards again found themselves stopped by another rearguard action. The main body of Layforce, with No. 2 Company of the 8th Battalion, 19th Australian Brigade, in support, held their ground staunchly, launching counter-attacks resulting in close-quarter fighting, so that Kampfgruppe Wittmann, its artillery of little use as it had no good observation points, had to wait for elements of Kampfgruppe Krakau to turn the position, which was successfully achieved at last light. Around midnight the rearguard force was reported as withdrawing and some three hours later the crossroads were reported as secured.

At first light on May 29 the pursuit eastwards was resumed, being slowed down by roadblocks, mined areas — most of which turned out to be fake — and a badly damaged bridge near Dramia which delayed the advance until 11.00 a.m. Retimo was entered at 1.00 p.m.; resistance put up by Greek troops was overcome and contact established with III. Bataillon of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 holding around a crossroads just east of the town. With the Australians apparently holding the heights east of the town with numerous machine guns and at least three artillery pieces — as confirmed by Wiedemann's paratroops who had opposed the Australians since the afternoon of the first day — further action was postponed until the following day when two armoured vehicles and two heavy infantry guns (brought to the island by sea) would be at hand. The 29th was spent in clearing up the Retimo area and several hundred prisoners were taken.

The evacuation order of May 27 had not reached Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell at Retimo but Brigadier Chappel had received it at Heraklion and, except for the wounded, the garrison of some 4,000 men was embarked during the night of the 28th-29th aboard the

Almost the reverse on the beach west of Canae for these British prisoners: then bare cheeks were the order of the day; now nothing! (ECP Armées)

A Gefreiter of the 5. Gebirgs-Division (eidelweiss on cap) admires the view from the Citadel at Retimo. (ECP Armées)

Today a new road has been cut along the sea front — the picture is taken looking east.

This is Heraklion — a lone paratrooper walks through the battle-scarred town as a café proprietor salvages what he can. (IWM)

The location was identified as Kalergon Square, still a popular eating area. On the left the Morozini Fountain.

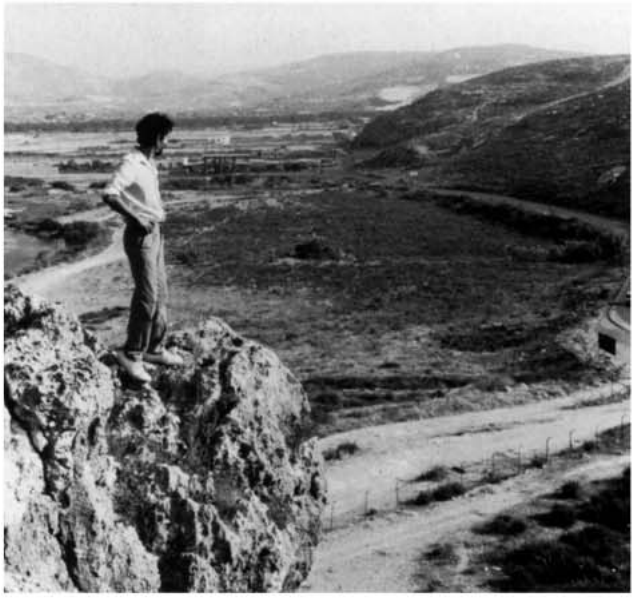
cruisers *Dido* and *Orion* (*Ajax* having been recalled to Alexandria after reporting damage from a near miss whilst running the gauntlet of bombing through the Kaso Strait) and the destroyers *Hotspur*, *Decoy*, *Kimberley*, *Hereward*, *Jackal* and *Imperial*, under the command of Admiral Rawlings. On leaving, the *Imperial* had to be abandoned and sunk as her steering gear broke down, and the *Hereward* was lost after being bombed in the Kaso Strait. *Decoy*, *Dido* and *Orion* were damaged in frequent air attacks during the return voyage (*Orion* in two of them) in which the cruisers took the worst of it, with heavy casualties among the troops crowded on board. When the paratroops closed in on the British positions at Heraklion early on May 29 — after regrouping the previous day with the paratroop reinforcements which had dropped on May 27 — the airfield and town were taken without a shot being fired.

At Retimo, early on May 30 the guns which had been brought forward started to bombard the Australian gun positions and the heights east of the town. The effect of this barrage was that more and more Allied soldiers, first individually, then in groups, appeared with arms raised or waving anything that happened to be white. A cease-fire was ordered and within a quarter of an hour the vanguard company had gathered 700 Australian prisoners, including Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell. The men of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 who had previously been taken prisoner were liberated, among them the regiment's commander, Oberst Alfred Sturm.

Leaving a detachment to guard the prisoners and gather in the Allied troops still scattered in the hills — about 1,100 Australians and Greeks according to Campbell — Kampfgruppe Wittmann resumed the march eastwards at 7.30 a.m. An hour later contact was made with the eastern group of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 (Major Kroh's I. Bataillon), which as Wittmann recorded in his after-action report of June 1, gave his men an enthusiastic reception, and the advance was pushed forward. 'At three or four places the group was fired upon', wrote Wittmann. 'Several civilians who were captured with weapons in their hands were summarily tried and shot. Suspicious houses from which rifle fire had come were set alight.' At about 11.45 a.m. contact was gained with a reconnaissance patrol from Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 which had been holding out in the Heraklion area since the afternoon of the first day, and at about 1.30 p.m. the vanguard reached the airfield which had been occupied the day before by Oberst Bräuer's paratroops. So the advance went on, with a couple of armoured vehicles leading for safety's sake when the road entered the pass about three miles east of Mallia. At the road junction at Pahia Ammos, nine miles east of Agios Nikolaos, contact was made with a motorised reconnaissance from the small Italian force that had landed on May 28 at Sitia on the eastern tip of the island. After more greetings it was onward again until Ierapetra was reached at 10.00 p.m. No Allied troops were met with in the town, the only sign of life being a few Greek policemen.

Further down Avgoustou Street (on the right in the picture at the top of the page) lies the harbour. The picture was taken from the wall of the Venitian fortress which guards the entrance. (ECP Armées)

Above: **Heraklion airfield at last in German hands. As a Ju 52 comes in to land, two members of the Luftwaffe point out features on the road leading to the east. (ECP Armées)** *Below:* **Jean Paul in the rôle he loves best — in the footsteps of past warriors . . . right down to the last inch!**



Generalleutnant Student (centre) observes the airfield from the height on which the Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 command post was located during the battle for Heraklion (see also page 2). The beach on the right is at Amnisos.

The Evacuation

MAY 29-JUNE 1

The evacuation plan for the Allied troops facing Gruppe West entailed withdrawing southwards across the island along a road which ascended 3,000 feet to end a mile and a half from Sphakia where embarkation began on the night of May 28. This Bren carrier lies between Agios Ioanis and Amnisos. (ECP Armées)

As the German command had failed to realise immediately that the British were withdrawing southwards towards Sphakia instead of eastwards, large forces had not been sent in the direction of the little south coast fishing port on which the evacuation was centred, and this was not rectified before May 31. At 8.50 a.m. on May 29 the I. Bataillon of Gebirgs-Jäger-Regiment 100 of Kampfgruppe Utz had been sent southwards and that afternoon the II. Bataillon also moved forward, advancing until about 6.00 p.m. when it was stopped just north of Kares by a determined rearguard. The attack was resumed next morning and the mountain troops made further progress, taking the Imbros Pass, to reach a point only about two and a half miles from the coast. By the evening of May 30 the whole of Crete except the Loutro-Sphakia area was in German hands. That evening General Freyberg left the island in a flying boat which had set down at Sphakia to take him off. Brigadier Inglis, commander of the 4th New Zealand Brigade, who was ordered among other officers to go with him, was not alone in attempting to insist that his duty was to remain with his men and being told plainly that he was to leave.

When May 31 dawned, the Royal Navy had by then taken off several thousand men from Crete since the first night of the evacuation which began with the rescue of the Heraklion garrison and the embarkation at Sphakia of a relatively small number of between 750 and 800 men by the four destroyers *Napier*, *Nizam*, *Kandahar* and *Kelvin* under the command of Captain S. H. T. Arliss. About 6,000 were lifted off the following night (May 29-30) when a force arrived at Sphakia, commanded by Admiral King, which comprised the cruisers *Phoebe* and *Perth*, the anti-aircraft cruisers *Calcutta* and *Coventry*, the destroyers *Jarvis*, *Janus* and *Hasty*, and the troopship *Glengyle* — Perth receiving a hit in a boiler room on the way back. About 1,500 were embarked the next night when the *Napier* and *Nizam* returned — the other two destroyers having been forced to turn back to Alexandria: the *Kandahar* as a result of engine trouble and the *Kelvin* after a near miss by bombs had reduced her speed to 20 knots.

Although the Luftwaffe bombarded the troops waiting near Sphakia and the rearguards still fighting near Komitades, the Germans were unable to push down to the coast. Another 3,700 men were taken off during the night after the *Phoebe*, with the minelayer *Abdiel* and the *Kimberley*, *Hotspur* and *Jackal* arrived from Alexandria for the last night of the evacuation. To provide additional air protection the *Calcutta* and *Coventry* were sent to rendezvous with this force of Admiral King's as it returned, and the *Calcutta* was sunk when the anti-aircraft cruisers were attacked by two Ju 88s on the morning of June 1.

Before being flown out too as ordered, General Weston, who assumed command on the island upon Freyberg's departure, issued written instructions on the 31st to Lieutenant-Colonel F. B. Colvin, commanding A Battalion of Layforce, for capitulation the following morning. At 9.00 a.m. on June 1, the British forces began to surrender and the Germans soon occupied Komitades, Sphakia and Loutro. The war diary of the 5. Gebirgs-Division recorded that final resistance was overcome at 4.00 p.m. in the mountains north of Sphakia.

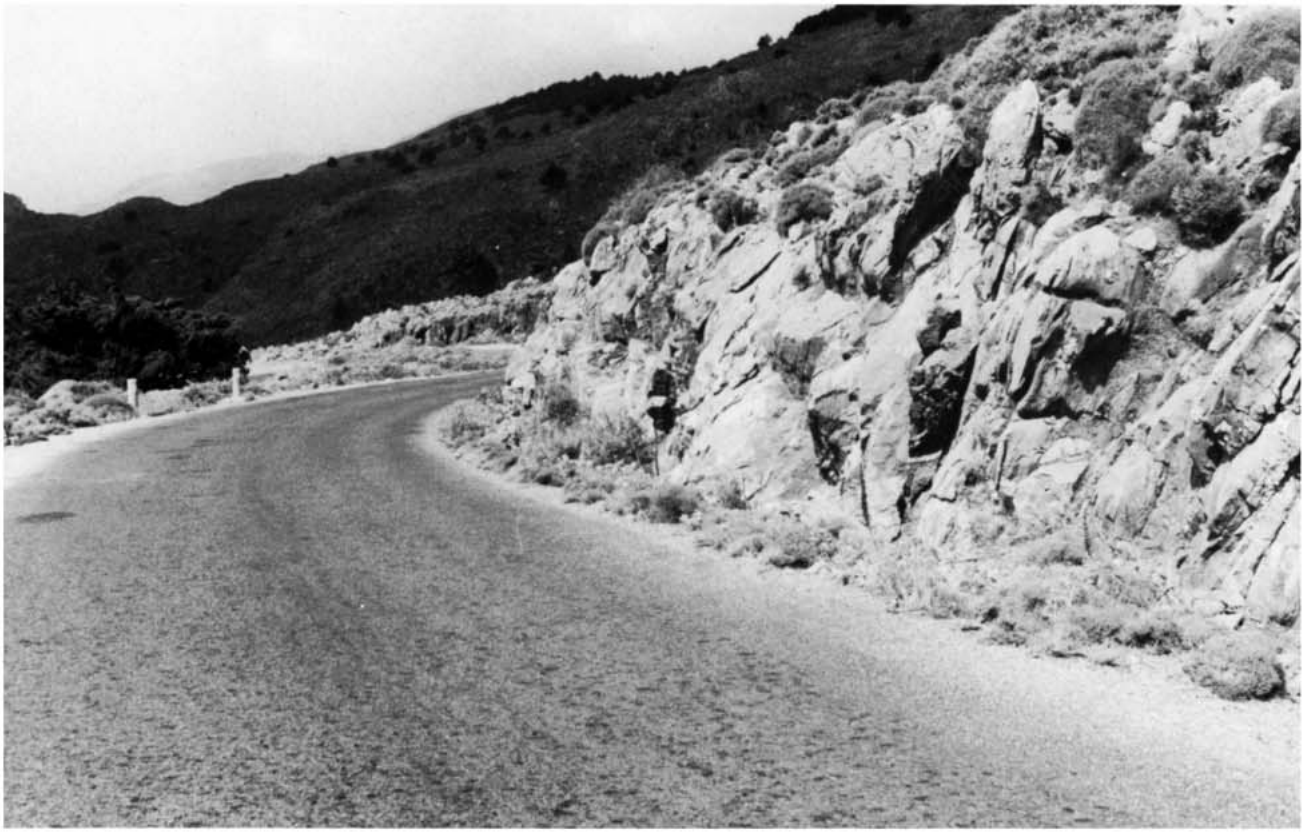
The success of Operation 'Merkur' was nonetheless a Pyrrhic victory. Of the 22,000 or so men committed for the operation (about 750 of them gliderborne, 10,000 coming down by parachute 5,000 brought in by air and 6,000 by sea) approximately 6,000 had been killed. Among the casualties were some of the key men in the airborne force: Generalleutnant Süssmann, Major Braun, Major Scherber, Oberleutnant von Plessen. . . . In Churchill's words 'the very spearhead of the German lance had been shattered'. The mountain troops had lost 20 officers and 305 other ranks killed in action; the missing, most of them drowned when the Royal Navy sunk the boats transporting them, numbered 18 officers and 488 other ranks. Of the nearly 500 transport aircraft involved, 271 had been lost.

The British (i.e. British and Dominion) casualty figures for the fighting in the island were 1,742 killed, 1,737 wounded and 11,835 taken prisoner. Almost 15,000 men were evacuated to Egypt (about 7,000 British, 3,000 Australians and 4,500 New Zealanders). The number of Greek casualties has never been precisely established.

For the Royal Navy the battle for Crete cost the Mediterranean Fleet dearly: one aircraft carrier and three battleships damaged, three cruisers and six destroyers sunk, six cruisers and nine destroyers damaged. Just over 2,000 men were killed or lost at sea and almost 500 wounded.

Hitler, who had taken a considerable interest in the airborne forces right from the early days, was sufficiently perturbed by the heavy losses suffered on Crete that two months after the end of the campaign he declared to Student: 'the day of the parachutist is over. The parachute arm is a surprise weapon and without the element of surprise there can be no future for airborne forces'. After Crete there was never to be another large-scale German airborne operation.

An army in retreat on the road to Sphakia. Down this track, converted into a 'sheeprace' so that once a vehicle got into the flow of traffic it could not stop, came hundreds of men: hungry, thirsty and close to the limit of their endurance. Jean Paul established that the picture had been taken just above Komitades, a small village a mile or so to the east of the evacuation beach. (ECP Armées) Now all has been swept away; the carriageway widened, its surface bituminised. Who could imagine the drama once enacted on this spot during one of the darkest years of the British Empire?



Crete Today

Today, Crete, like many other of its Mediterranean neighbours, is a tourist resort and the island has changed significantly to adapt to this new rôle. The northern coast — the main battlefield — is a predominant tourist area centred on towns like Canae (Hania on the present day maps) and Agios-Nikolaos — the St Tropez of the island. With many charter flights available during the summer months, Crete is very accessible to the modern tourist although 'After the Battle' readers will no doubt prefer to land at the old airfield at Heraklion rather than the post-war airport built on Akrotiri peninsula.

Awards for the victors. Having launched history's first — and still the only successful — purely airborne invasion, the Germans could justly be proud of their achievements. Recipients of the Knight's Cross among the fallschirmjäger and gebirgsjäger who took part in the battle for Crete included: Generalleutnant Wilhelm Süssmann — awarded on May 25 (five days after his death); Oberst Richard Heidrich (June 14), August Krakau (June 21), Willibald Utz (June 21), Alfred Sturm (July 9), Bernard-Hermann Ramcke (August 21), Heinrich Neumann (August 21) Maximilian Jais (September 17); Oberstleutnant August Wittmann (June 21); Major Ludwig Heilmann (June 14), Edgar Stentzler (July 9), Hans Kroh (August 21); Hauptmann Walter Gericke (June 14), Friedrich-August von der Heydte (July 9); Oberleutnant Alfred Genz (June 14), Hans Toschka (June 14), Josef Barmetler (July 9), Karl-Heinz Becker (July 9), Reinhard Egger (July 9), Andreas Hagl (July 9), Harry Herrmann (July 9), Arnold von Roon (July 9), Horst Trebes (July 9); Leutnant Wilhelm Fulda (June 14); Oberfeldwebel Heinrich Welskop (August 21); Feldwebel Wilhelm Kempke (August 21) and Erich Schuster (August 21). Here Generalleutnant Student (who had won his own Ritterkreuz on May 12, 1940) decorates an unidentified Major, Hauptmann and two Oberleutnants with the Iron Cross First Class. (ECP Armées)

For those that died a cross of a different sort — a hand-painted grave marker. Oberleutnant Hans Begemann commanded the 9. Kompanie of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 2 and was killed on May 28 at Perivolia by men of his own side during the confused fighting for the village. (ECP Armées) Today he lies in Grave 837 of Block 2 at Maleme Soldatenfriedhof.

No glorious ending for Bruno Bräuer (centre), commander of Fallschirm-Jäger-Regiment 1 during the battle. After a subsequent tour on the Eastern Front he returned to the island as governor and led a ruthless fight against the partisans. After the war he was charged and found guilty of war crimes by a Greek court and shot on May 20, 1947 exactly six years after the invasion of the island. After his execution he was buried alongside his men on Crete. (ECP Armées)

The Allied war cemetery was established at Suda Bay — the last resting place for 843 servicemen from the United Kingdom; 446 from New Zealand; 197 from Australia; 9 from South Africa, 5 from Canada and one from India.

Very little remains to be seen in Crete today as far as war relics are concerned. Just at the side of the Komitades road Jean Paul found a piece of wreckage — undoubedly from one of these four trucks. (Bundesarchiv)

Once one gets off the beaten track, the scene changes to that of the timeless Crete — its history spans the ages of ancient Greece, the glory of Rome, and the Turkish Empire — and we are fortunate to be able to include here several 'holiday snap'-type of photographs taken during the German occupation. It is so refreshing to get away from the commercialisation of the larger towns where there is a somewhat efficient, if artificial, air of enthusiasm towards tourists, sadly an attitude which in time will probably cover the whole island.

The main east-west road along the northern coast — so vital in the battle — has been upgraded almost to motorway standard but the other extreme can be found further inland where some roads are virtually stony tracks! On secondary roads signposts are a rarity but those that do exist are inscribed with dual Greek/European lettering. Both cars and motor scooters can be hired, the latter being quite a practical form of transport during the fine long summer days. In the town, the gunfire of forty years ago has now given way to the toot-tooting of countless motor horns to produce a sound quite disproportionate to their number.

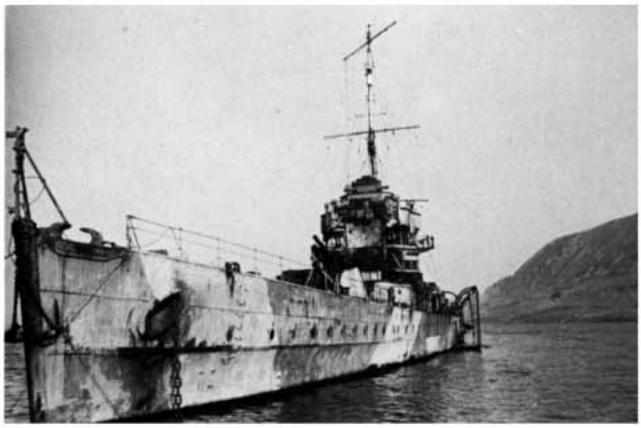
As far as the pertinent battle sites are concerned, Heraklion and Retimo are disappointing having suffered from a rapid, unplanned development leaving many eyesores and unfinished buildings on the outskirts. The airfield at Retimo has been completely returned to nature with nothing to show its former use, and Maleme airfield, while still in being, is closed to the casual visitor. Likewise it is not possible to explore Suda Bay which is a current naval base with photography forbidden.

The edge of the Bay was selected as a suitable 'maritime' setting for the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery contrasting with the inland site chosen for the German war dead on the slopes of Hill 107 at Maleme.

To the relic hunter Crete is somewhat of a disappointment — the stories of glider and Ju 52 wrecks still abounding being unsubstantiated. A search of the roadside leading to the evacuation beach at Sphakia, littered with abandoned vehicles in 1941, revealed only pathetic remnants of the motor transport which perished along its tortuous route. As one islander said to Jean Paul: 'You know Mister, Cretans were very poor in those times and their life was very difficult. They take no interest at all in such souvenirs and I think everything has been thrown away'.

Today the island on which the elite German airborne weapon was expended in a phyrric victory against a resolute Commonwealth force is the playground of another generation. Where once paratrooper faced infantryman, German boys now skylark with British girls, neither of them aware of the bitter battles fought on the same ground forty years previously. Many civilisations have had a part in shaping the history of Crete yet the impact of the Second World War has left little lasting impression.

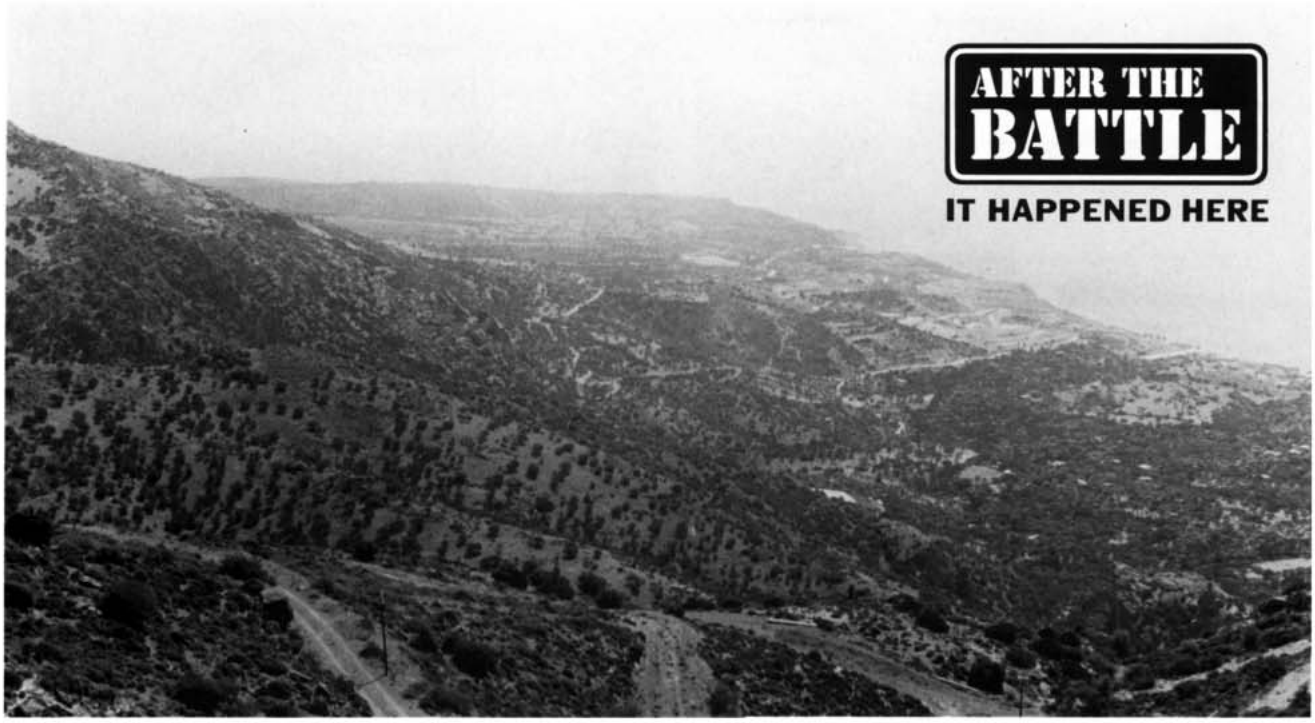
The largest 'relic' to be seen after the battle, which attracted many curious fallschirmjäger, was the British cruiser York in the middle of Suda Bay. Crippled by sottotenente Angelo Cabrini and nocchiere Tullio Tedeschi on March 26, she was bombed by German aircraft on May 29. (ECP Armées)



Footprints in time across four thousand years of civilisation. The Palace of Knossos was built around 2000 BC; destroyed by earthquakes in 1700 BC it was ruined again 300 years later. The present building is a 20th Century reconstruction.

A sculpture which has withstood an aeon: focal point for tourists a generation apart. (ECP Armées)

Above: Generalfeldmarschall Wilhelm List and Generalmajor Julius Ringel study the ruin of the Roman Odeon near Gortyne built by Emperor Trajan. *Below:* The same group visit the Byzantine church dating from the 7th century. (ECP Armées)



AFTER THE BATTLE

IT HAPPENED HERE

THE KIDNAPPING OF GENERAL KREIPE

The successful kidnapping of the German commander on Crete on April 26, 1944 has gone down in the annals of the Special Operations Executive as one of its most audacious undercover operations carried out during the Second World War. Masterminded from the Cairo East section of the SOE, the operation was conceived in January 1944 when the Cretan population was suffering under a particularly severe German military commander, General Friedrich-Wilhelm Müller. Müller had been decorated with the Ritterkreuz when commander of Infanterie-Regiment 105 in 1941 — his star-studded career leading to his being the 86th recipient of the Oakleaves to the award the following year and the Swords were added in 1945 when commanding general of LXVIII. Armee-Korps. His brutal reign, finally as commander of the 4. Armee in the Balkans, brought him his final reward, this time from the Greeks who executed him in Athens on May 20, 1947.

General Müller therefore was the target around which the operation was planned and it was not the fault of SOE that he was re-replaced at the last moment by General Heinrich Kreipe who had been moved from the Eastern Front in October 1943, to be appointed commander of the 22. Infanterie-Division in Crete in February 1944.

Leading the British operation was Major Patrick Leigh-Fermor with Captain W. Stanley Moss as his second in command. The latter kept a diary of the operation and illustrated it with a remarkable set of photographs and, although the War Office forbade publication of it in 1945, it was publicised as one of the programmes in the BBC radio series 'Now It Can Be Told' broadcast in 1950 and published under the title *Ill Met By Moonlight*. (Stanley Moss went on to investigate the so-called largest robbery of all time concerning the Reichsbank gold reserves — *see After the Battle No. 31*.)

On February 4, 1944, Major Leigh-Fermor and Captain Moss flew together with two Greek SOE agents, Manoli Paterakis and George Tirakis, from Bardia in Egypt to a point on the Lasithi plain in Crete. However only Major Leigh-Fermor had managed to parachute from the aircraft before the weather closed in completely covering the drop zone. Another attempt to drop the remainder of the party on March 4 had to be aborted, which led to their eventual arrival on the island by sea four weeks later on April 4 — just a few days after Müller had been replaced. After an enthusiastic welcome from the Major, who had joined up with local partisans, the whole group loaded the kit and supplies onto the waiting mules for the journey across country to the chosen hideout in the village of Kastamonitsa which was within reasonable striking distance of the German HQ. Although the prime target — Müller — was no longer on the island, nevertheless it was decided that the operation to kidnap the new German commander would go ahead. Captain Moss takes up the story: 'General Heinrich Kreipe, the newly appointed commander of the 22nd Infantry Division, travelled twice daily from the Villa Ariadne at Knossos

Above: **The kidnappers. L-R: Grigori Chnaris, Stratis Saviolakis, Manoli Paterakis, Major Patrick Leigh-Fermor, Andoni Papaleonidas (nicknamed Wallace Beery), Captain Stanley Moss, George Tirakis and 'Nikko' — Nikos Komis. The four agents in uniform from the Special Operations Executive were assisted in the abduction by partisans already on Crete. Major Leigh-Fermor landed by parachute; the other three came ashore on the south coast of the island near Keratokambos (*top*).**

The target. General Heinrich Kreipe (*left*) became the new victim when he replaced General Müller. His quarters were at the Villa Ariadne (*above*). (Bundesarchiv)

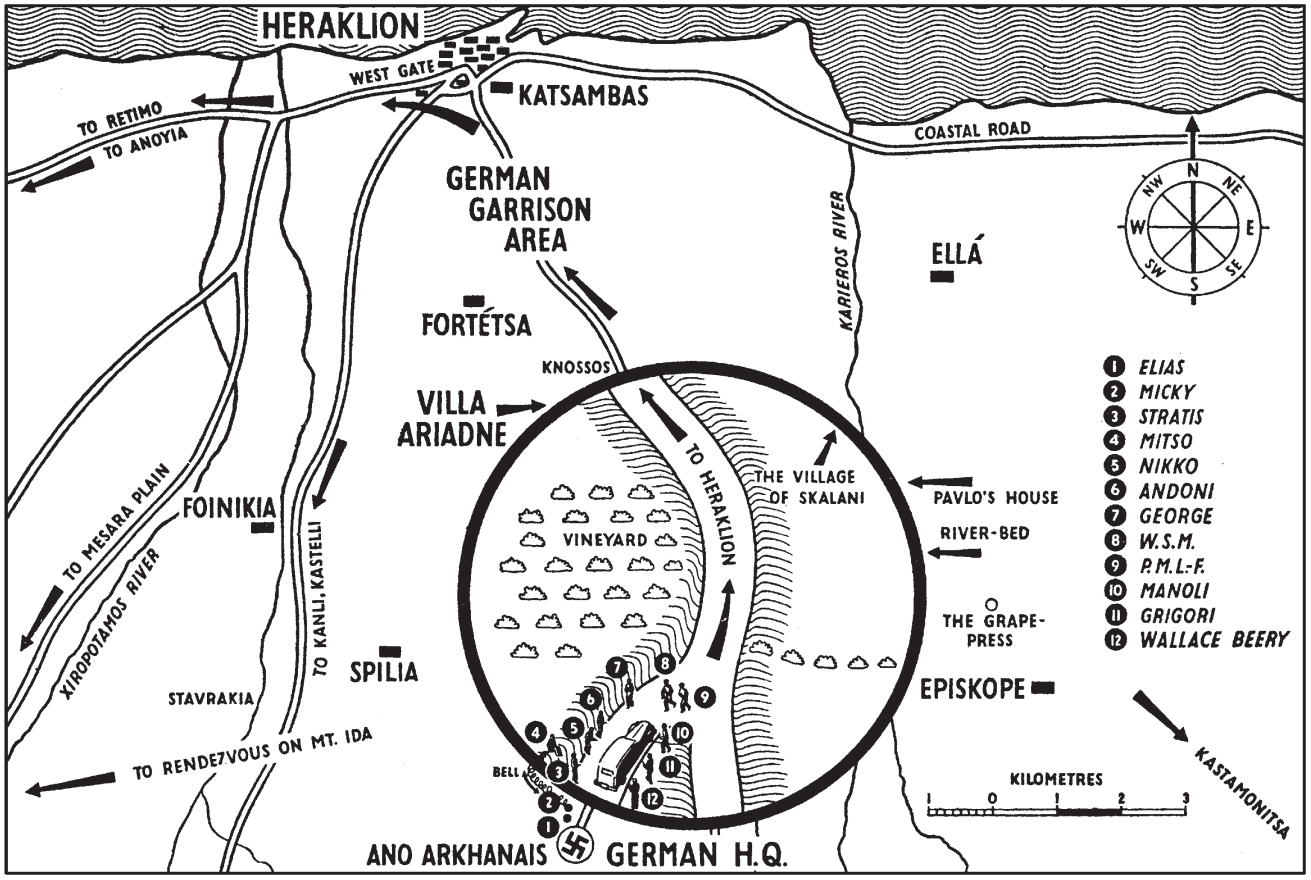
to his headquarters located at Arhanes. His average working hours were from 9.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 4.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. or 8.30 p.m. Occasionally he remained at his headquarters until late at night, but this was rather accounted for by his penchant for bridge than for reasons of overtime work. The best and most obvious moment at which to attempt an abduction was during his last journey home, because by that time it was fairly dark — sunset being at 7.45 p.m. — and, in addition, the guard at the Villa Ariadne, imagining that the General had stayed at his headquarters for dinner or a game of cards, would not become immediately suspicious of his absence. These facts were based on information supplied by Micky and Elias. [Micky Akoumianakis, chief SOE agent in Heraklion and Elias Athanassakis, his second in command.]

'During their reconnaissance Paddy [Major Leigh-Fermor] and Micky had discovered what they considered to be an ideal spot for the ambush. This was a T-junction where the Arkhanais road meets the Houdetsi-Heraklion road, and here any car travelling towards Knossos would inevitably have to slow down almost to a standstill. Two sides of the road at this point are highly banked, and all three sides are bordered by ditches which are deep enough to afford concealment.

'The system of the electric bell, suggested by Elias, was an essential part of the plan's machinery. Both he and Micky were to position themselves on a hillock about three hundred metres up the road towards Arhanes, with a view to keeping a look-out for the General's car. A length of wire was to be unrolled from their position to ours at the T-junction, a bell or buzzer being placed at our end. Thus when they recognised the General's car they were to ring the bell so as to warn us of its approach. In addition, we thought it advisable to detail somebody to the specific job of "buzzer-man", who would listen for the signal and at the crucial moment flash a torch at Paddy and me, who would be standing by in a ditch.

'In the guise of German police corporals, equipped with red lamps and traffic signals, Paddy and I were going to stand in the centre of the road as the car approached and signal it to stop. We would then walk towards it, Paddy on the left side and myself on the right, and make certain that the General was inside; then, on a given word, we would rip open the doors, Paddy hauling out the General while I dealt with the chauffeur. Elias had told us that the General usually sat in the front seat of the car beside the chaffeur, so we felt safe in

The fatal junction. After leaving his headquarters at Arhanes, the General's car, emerging from the road behind the bush, would have to stop here before turning left onto the Heraklion road towards his villa. (Jean Paul Pallud)



'Scene of crime' plan of the operation. Reproduced from 'Ill Met by Moonlight' by W. Stanley Moss by courtesy of George Harrap & Co. Ltd.

basing our plan of action on this supposition. However, we still had to reckon with the possibility of there being additional passengers in the car, and as provision against this eventuality we detailed specific members of our band to wait in the ditches until the car's headlamps had passed them, and then, at the moment that Paddy and I opened the doors, to rush to the car and deal with anyone who might be sitting in the back seat. Thus Paddy, backed by Manoli, would go for the General, Andoni Zoidakis and Nikos Komis for whoever was sitting behind him, Wallace Beery and Grigori for any occupant of the other back seat, and myself, with George behind me, for the chauffeur.

'The rôle of the other guerillas was that they should take up a triangular defensive position about fifty yards from every flank of the T-junction and, if the occasion arose, hold up any traffic which might come along the road during the few critical moments of the ambush.

'Once the occupants of the car had been dealt with, Paddy and Manoli were to bundle the General into the back seat, while I was to take charge of the driving-wheel and prevent the car from running away (because the road was on a slight incline). All occupants of the car, excepting the General, would then be taken away on foot by Grigori, Wallace Beery, together with two other Cretans in the group, Nikos and Andoni, and they would make a two-day cross-country trek to a rendezvous with us on Mount Psiloriti (Ida). Manoli, George, and the guide Yannie were to sit in the back of the car and keep the General covered, while Paddy, wearing the General's hat, would sit in front beside me and take upon himself the imposing cloak of a brass-hat.

'We would then drive off along the main road, past the Villa Ariadne, and on to the market square in the centre of Heraklion. Once there, we would branch westward along the coastal road. We would drive as far as a point due north of the mountain village of Anoyia, whereupon the General, Manoli, Yannie, and myself would leave the car and start marching southward towards the foothills of Mount Ida. Paddy and George, in the meantime, would drive the car a further two or three kilometres and ditch it at a point where the road made a tangent with the coast. This, we hoped, might give the Germans the impression that we had gone straight from the car to a waiting submarine.'

Within three weeks all was ready and the operation was set for April 26 — a Wednesday. General Kreipe himself describes what happened:

'In the morning I was with my troops, who were scattered over a wide area, and at midday and in the afternoon I was at divisional HQ at Arhanes. I spent the evening in the officers' mess and at 9 o'clock I drove home. There was a machine gun in the car and my chauffeur was armed with a pistol. We were alone.

'First we drove a short distance in a south-easterly direction, and then we had to join the main road to Heraklion. This was quite a good way but before branching into the main road itself we had to drive through a narrow pass with a hairpin bend. This was the point selected for the commando raid — a good choice because we had to drive very slowly there.

'Suddenly a red light appeared in the darkness in front of us, approximately on the bend. The chauffeur asked: "Shall I stop?" We were accustomed to traffic control patrols, and I answered: "Stop!" As the car drew to a halt two lance-corporals in German uniforms stepped forward. The older one, Leigh-Fermor, demanded to see my travel document. As I did not have one — it was not normally required — I said: "Don't know about that." "In that case the password please." Then I did something foolish. I got out of the car and said: "What unit are you? Don't you know your General?" (The car was showing the appropriate pennon and standard.) Leigh-Fermor, in his German soldier's disguise, said: "General, you are a prisoner-of-war in British hands."

'At this moment a partisan, a great big fellow with a bearded face, pounced on me. I was able to knock him down but then I was seized from behind and beaten to the ground. I was belaboured with gun-butts, tied up and gagged and, I am afraid, called "you damned German pig". I was thrown into the car and two partisans lay on top of me, threatening me with a dagger: "If you move, we will kill you!"

'In front sat the two "corporals", that is the British officers, and I could roughly tell the direction in which we were driving and I knew we were passing my villa near Knossos and heading for Heraklion. In Heraklion, I knew there were several control posts but only one of them called out to us. West of Heraklion, the road branched off to Rethimnon [Retimo], and near Rethimnon we had to get out. I heard next day that the car was driven to the coast and a note placed in it saying: "General Kreipe is on his way to Cairo". My car was, of course, known to everyone as belonging to the Commandant of the island. In reality I was taken on foot southwards into the mountains.

'By the next morning all radio stations, even in England, announced the news: "General Kreipe is on the way to Cairo". This meant that our people were deceived and their search was very ineffective in the beginning.

'For the next few days we walked through very rough country — at night or at dusk. During the hours of daylight we stayed in caves or hideouts in the forest; the ground was rocky. It was very difficult indeed. There were, of course, no paths and we were walking across country; moreover, no traces could be left. Only once did I hear German machine gun fire, perhaps one kilometre away from us, which meant that the deception had been most effective. The English had a first-class communications service and the co-operation between them and the partisans was excellent.

Captors and captive. *Left:* **A realistic disguise for Captain Moss (left) and Major Leigh-Fermor.** *Right:* **Captain Moss changed back into British battledress once the General had been captured. The most extraordinary aspect of the whole affair: the photographs taken at the time — unique pictures of SOE in action on one of their most successful operations.**

When difficulties arose, or there was news of Germans in the vicinity, warning beacons were lit from one mountain top to another.'

Initially the Germans believed their divisional commander had been captured by partisans and the next morning hastily printed leaflets in Greek were scattered over the island:

TO ALL CRETANS

Last night bandits kidnapped the German General Kreipe. He is now being held somewhere in the mountains and his whereabouts cannot be unknown to the population. If the General is not released within three days, all the rebel villages in the HERAKLION DISTRICT will be razed to the ground and the severest measures of reprisal will be taken against the civilian population.

Major Leigh-Fermor and Captain Moss had hoped to avoid the Germans taking it out on the Cretans by leaving a letter in the abandoned car which read:

TO THE GERMAN AUTHORITIES
IN CRETE

April 23, 1944

GENTLEMEN,

Your Divisional Commander, General KREIPE, was captured a short time ago by a BRITISH raiding force under our command. By the time you read this both he and we will be on our way to CAIRO.

We would like to point out most emphatically that this operation has been carried out without the help of CRETANS or CRETAN partisans, and the only guides used were serving soldiers of HIS HELLENIC MAJESTY'S FORCES in the Middle East, who came with us.

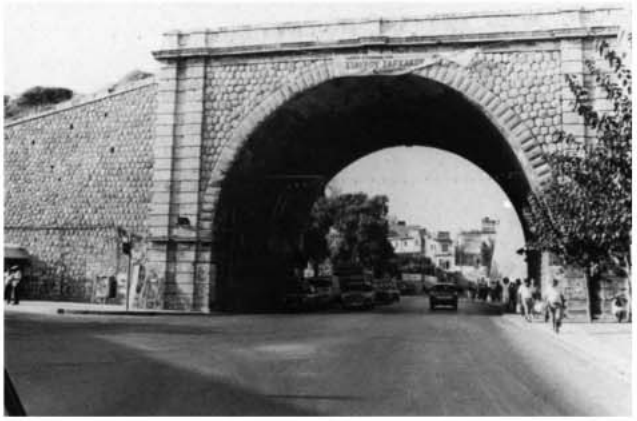
Your General is an honourable prisoner of war, and will be treated with all the consideration owing to his rank.

Any reprisals against the local population will be wholly unwarranted and unjust.

Aufbaldiges Wiedersehen!

PS. We are very sorry to have to leave this beautiful car behind.

It had also been arranged that the BBC would broadcast a news item to say that a British raiding party had carried out the operation and that the General was already on his way to Cairo. Leaflets were also to be



Left: **During the getaway in the General's car, the trickiest spot to negotiate was the gate on the west side of Heraklion. Here the Germans had narrowed the road with concrete anti-tank blocks and the sentry inspected all traffic. Luckily he accepted their cry of 'Generals Wagen' and they drove on west on the road in the direction of Retimo.** *Right:* **In order to mislead the Germans Moss and the General got out of the car here before daybreak to proceed over the mountains towards the southern shore, while the car was abandoned further to the west on the road near Drossia. (Jean Paul Pallud)**

The morning after the night before. Not unnaturally the General was not in the mood for photographs.

dropped. In the event this part of the plan backfired: bad weather cancelled the leaflet aircraft and the BBC stated that the General *was being* taken off the island. Therefore, instead of hopefully convincing the Germans that a search for their commander was useless, instead it had the opposite effect and they redoubled their efforts to find him!

The Germans found the abandoned staff car later that day as patrols combed the hills and low-flying aircraft begun quartering the ground. Suspecting that the kidnappers were making for the southern coast to be picked up, troops were stationed all along the shore as others ringed the Ida mountain range. Hiding up in an isolated shepherd's hut, the party waited to receive the signal which would give the time of the rendezvous. However when news arrived that the proposed beach was occupied by two hundred German troops, and they were in danger of being completely surrounded, Major Leigh-Fermor decided to set out to make contact with an SOE radio operator to arrange an alternative pick up point. The almost inaccessable coastline at Rodakino appeared to be the best choice and, managing to postpone the original plan which included the landing of a Commando detachment to clear the passage to the beach, the group made its way to the new rendezvous. During the march across the mountains, General Kreipe fell off the mule he was riding and injured his right shoulder.

For seventeen days the group continued to make its tortuous way across the mountains towards the new beach, having several near scrapes and splitting up at one stage to avoid German patrols on the way. By May 14 the party had reassembled at the chosen beach where they were evacuated by launch that night. After a rough twenty-four-hour crossing of the Mediterranean the boat arrived at Mersa Matruh from where the General was flown to Cairo and thence to London via Gibraltar. After interrogation General Kreipe was transferred to a prison camp near Calgary in Canada. He was released in 1947.

Increasing pressure from German patrols forced the group to turn west before approaching the beach at Rodakino, about nine miles east of Sphakia (see map page 2/3). In all they had trekked some seventy-five miles in seventeen days. (Jean Paul Pallud)

Major Leigh-Fermor and Captain Moss were awarded the Distinguished Service Order for their remarkable exploit — an exploit made all the more dramatic by the photographs they took during the actual operation, several of which are reproduced here with acknowledgment to Billy Moss who died in tragic circumstances in 1965.

Left: **At one stage General Kreipe fell and hurt his shoulder. It was still in a sling when he bade farewell to his kidnappers on reaching Cairo.** *Above:* **Photographed on May 23, 1944 by Lieutenant West en route to three years' captivity. (IWM)**

THE GRANVILLE RAID

BY MICHAEL GINNS

During the opening months of 1945 the daily war communiqués put out by the High Command of the German Forces contained little that was good news for the German nation. By March of that year the Anglo-American armies were lining up on the west bank of the Rhine, the Soviets were preparing for the final assault on Berlin, thousands of tons of bombs were raining down upon German cities and Hitler was about to retreat into the bunker from which he would never emerge alive. Suddenly, however, on March 9, 1945, on the very day that US troops captured intact the bridge over the Rhine at Remagen, the German broadcasters had a stirring deed to report. At an astonishing 500 miles behind the main battlefront, German commandos had stormed ashore into the French port of Granville, on the west coast of the Cotentin peninsula, shooting up the town and harbour, destroying port facilities and ships while at the same time releasing a number of German prisoners-of-war from American captivity. And all this for the loss of only one ship and four men on their own side.

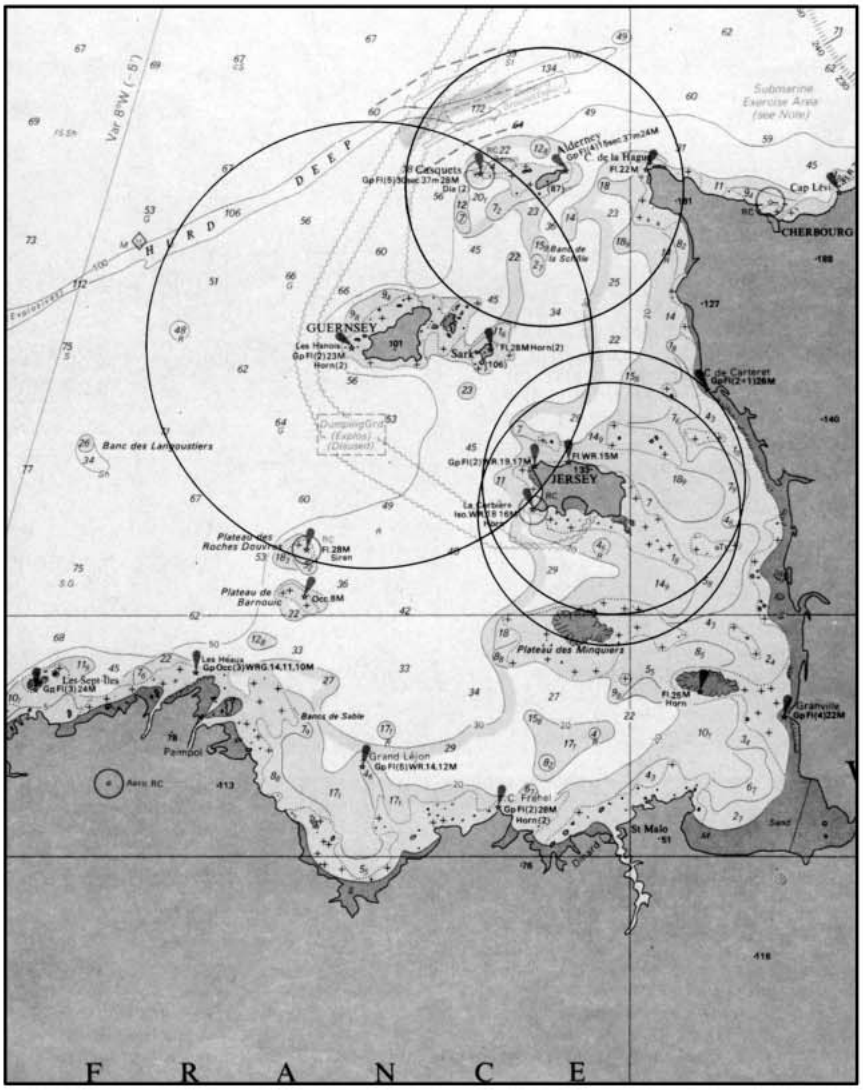
How could such a blow have been struck when Germany as a whole was at its last gasp? To seek the answer it is necessary to go back to July 1944. By this date all of France as well as the adjacent British Channel Islands had endured four long, weary years of enemy occupation with all the hardships, shortages, arrests and deportations that such a situation inevitably entailed. During this period the Germans, at Hitler's insistence, had turned the Channel Islands into the most heavily fortified part of the Atlantic Wall. However, by July 1944 relief for the islanders seemed to be at hand. The Allies had landed in Normandy and, after much hard fighting, units of the US Army turned southward from Cherbourg, along the Cotentin peninsula, in the direction of Granville which, together with the larger port of St Malo still further to the south-west, had been the principal port used by the Germans to supply the Channel Islands during the occupation years.

The town of Granville itself was, and still is, a pleasant enough spot, being divided virtually into two parts, with the old town, known as La Haute Ville, standing on the heights to the north of the harbour while the newer parts of the town sprawl out in all directions to the rear of the harbour. Sharing the heights with the old town are a large French Army barracks, the harbour signal station and the casemates of a one-time 15cm German coastal battery which protected the approaches to the harbour during hostilities.

Immediately to the north of the heights are several large spa hotels and the main bathing beach, all of which will feature in this narrative. As the Americans advanced towards Granville the destruction of its harbour was ordered by Generalfeldmarschall Günther von Kluge who had only recently replaced the unfortunate Generalfeldmarschall Gerd von Rundstedt as Oberbefehlshaber West (Commander-in-Chief West).

Top: **Wrecked port installations burn at Granville, set on fire by German forces in July 1944 as they abandoned the town. (Signal Corps)** *Above:* **Today, completely reconstructed, Granville provides facilities for both commercial and pleasure craft.**

On the Channel Islands, 67 guns of 15cm (6-inch) and above, sited in 16 different batteries, covered the northern approaches to Granville. The largest on Guernsey — Batterie Mirus — comprised four guns of 30.5cm (12-inch) with a range of 38,000 metres (23 miles), and Batteries Schlieffen and Haeseler on Jersey and Blücher on Alderney with 15cm guns out to 15 miles. (Based on Admiralty Chart 5053 Crown Copyright)



When American forces entered Granville they found that the town itself had suffered little damage when compared with the ruination which had befallen other towns and cities in Normandy like St Lô, Caen and Cherbourg. The destruction of the harbour itself, however, had been carried out with characteristic thoroughness and tugs and barges such as the *Georges Guynemer*, *Point à Pitre* and *Comptoir 51* which had supplied the Channel Islands for some four years, had been blown up and sunk at strategic points around the harbour. Needless to say, the lock gates had been damaged beyond repair and a barge scuttled in the lock itself.

Leaving Granville behind them the Americans took Avranches and turned westward along the Brittany peninsula towards the large port of Brest. It had been hoped to take Brest with the minimum amount of fighting as it was the nearest port to America on the continent of Europe, and its capture intact would have meant a considerable easing of supply problems. In this object, however, the US Army was to be disappointed for initially they met unexpected opposition at St Malo where the Germans under Oberst von Aulock held out until mid-August, resulting in the utter devastation of the fine old city and harbour *(see After the Battle No. 33)*. Similarly, when Brest finally capitulated a month later the harbour there was so

Granville under the watchful eye of a photographic aircraft of the US 67th Tactical Reconnaissance Group on July 30, 1944 — the day that the Germans evacuated the town. (Keele University Crown Copyright)

destroyed and blocked with mines and sunken ships that it was impossible to begin even limited use of the port until after the war. Thus nearly all supplies had to flow through the port of Cherbourg which, as a result, was greatly congested.

By the end of September, with the exception of the Biscay Fortresses which continued to hold out, all Germans had been driven out of France but if this meant liberation for most of the population of that country, it meant nothing of the sort for the population of the Channel Islands where the Germans had settled in for a long drawn out siege. During the four years of enemy occupation the Channel Islands, as mentioned earlier, had been fortified out of all proportion to their strategic value. Manned by a garrison of 28,000 troops of all arms, for their size they contained more emplaced artillery, more flak and more concrete fortifications than anywhere else in Western Europe. *(See 'The War in the Channel Islands — Then and Now' published by After the Battle.)* The Channel Islands, however, were of strategic value to the Germans only as long as they held the adjacent French coast — once the latter was in Allied hands, the islands were useless. This fact had long been patently clear to the German High Command but never to Hitler himself who was determined to hold on to the Channel Islands at whatever cost. When, on July 17, 1944, Generalfeldmarschall Erwin Rommel sought permission from Hitler to remove most of the troops from the Channel Islands, the Führer flew into one of his rages and forbade Rommel ever to raise the matter again. Thus was the fate of the garrison sealed.

On the Allied side the matter of the Channel Islands had been settled at a conference held in London early in 1944. It was decided that while the islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark may have been of some value to the Germans as platforms for coastal artillery and radar, to the Allies they were of no strategic value whatsoever. In view of the concrete fortifications and concentration of installed weapons, to take the Channel Islands by force would have required three infantry divisions and an airborne brigade, all of them valuable troops who were required more urgently elsewhere. It was decided, therefore, that the Channel Islands would be bypassed and contained by units of the Royal Navy in the hope that once the adjacent French coast was in American hands, the Germans could be induced to surrender. However, by September, when this state of affairs had been reached, the German Command on the Channel Islands had other ideas and, after rejecting several Allied offers of surrender terms, settled down for the longest, coldest and hungriest winter of the entire war. The civilian population had to settle down with them.

With destroyers of the Royal Navy and the US Navy prowling the horizon, no supplies of any sort whatsoever came to sustain the German garrison other than a few irregular supply flights made by Heinkel transport aircraft of the Luftwaffe which flew all the way from Germany under cover of darkness bringing Field Post for the troops and urgent medical goods. On the return journey the Heinkels would usually carry wounded and sick personnel and, of course, outgoing post. Next to the shortage of food, the commodity most needed was coal, for without coal there was little fuel other than wood available, no gas and precious little electricity and the winter of 1944/45 was the coldest that Europe had experienced in many a long year.

This same shortage of coal was also making itself felt in newly liberated France. With the failure of Operation 'Market Garden' (the airborne landing at Arnhem), all hope of ending the war by Christmas 1944 had to be abandoned and the problem of how to supply western France in general, and Paris in particular, with coal to enable the country to face the severe winter ahead soon raised itself. All France's coalmines lay to the east of the country and while that area had certainly been liberated there remained the problem of transportation. What little rail communication that remained in use due to the depredations of war, as well as all military road transport, was almost entirely given over to the carriage of war material to the front line, which had by now ground to a halt more or less on the German frontier. Therefore the only solution seemed to lie with Britain and the decision was taken to supply France with coal from British mines conveyed by sea from British ports.

The Avant-Port or outer harbour pictured in August 1944 as captured by the Americans with the masts of several sunken ships on the right. This part of the harbour virtually dries out at low water — one of the reasons why the Germans made more use of St Malo for convoys from Jersey to avoid ships hanging about outside Granville waiting for the high tide with the ever-present risk of attack from Allied aircraft. Although the inner harbour was 'wet', the 'lock' gates were really flood gates as the water level had to be equal on both sides before they could be opened. The wet dock (in French the Basin à Flot) provided seven berths on a draught of 5 metres (16.5ft) with a maximum length of 328 feet. The small dry dock in the outer harbour, just out of the photo to the right but visible on the aerial picture *opposite*, was 65 metres long and could cater for ships up to 200 feet long.

Once again transportation proved a problem as only Cherbourg had been sufficiently cleared for normal use and this port was given over almost entirely to the handling of war material. Le Havre, Rouen, Dieppe and, of course, Brest were virtually useless and so the authorities began to look for smaller ports which would suit their purpose and as early as August 19 the C-in-C Plymouth was issuing instructions to the effect that Granville, St Malo, Morlaix and St Brieuc should be re-opened at the earliest opportunity to permit coasters, mainly from South Wales, to land coal in France thereby relieving pressure on Cherbourg and its

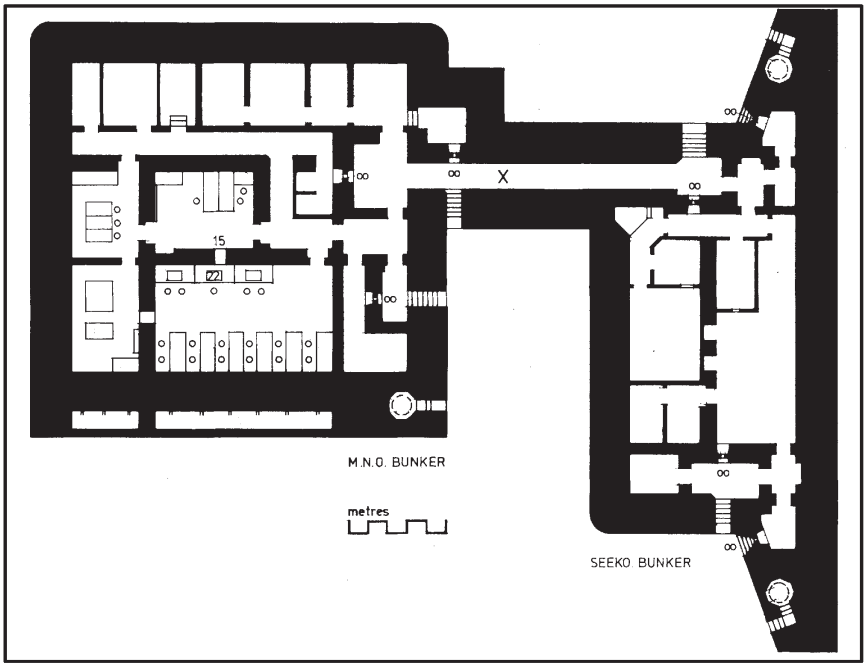
The Pointe du Roc — the local name for the promontary which shelters the harbour from north winds and on which La Haute Ville (the upper town) is built — was captured in 1439 by the Norman-English as a counter to the French stronghold at the western end of the Baie du Mont St Michel of the same name. The Knights of the Mont-St-Michel fortress captured Granville two years later.

Les Minquiers, for many years a source of dispute between Britain and France, lie midway between Jersey and St Malo and fishermen's huts on the largest outcrop — Le Maître — provided the Germans with an ideal ready-made observation post. It was here in December 1944 that the escaping German prisoners-of-war landed bringing up-to-date information on the Granville defences. These pictures were taken on the recapture of the islands by British troops in May 1945. The question of ownership was only finally settled in the International Court of Justice at the Hague in the 1950s. (Jersey Evening Post)

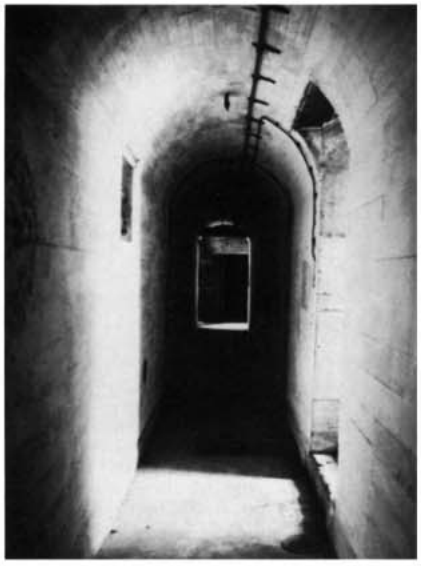
associated rail link with Paris. By September Granville had been sufficiently cleared to allow a trial entry by a collier and supply convoys soon followed. However, both Granville and St Malo are tidal harbours and although the berthing areas and locks had been cleared in both cases, it had not proved possible to repair the lock gates and with the enormous tidal range in the Gulf of St Malo (about 40 feet on high springs), it meant that only a small number of ships could enter or leave the harbours during a few hours on either side of high water. At low tide most of the berths would dry out.

Nevertheless operations soon commenced and convoys of colliers escorted by armed trawlers were plying between South Wales and Granville or St Malo, at the same time giving the long range batteries on the Channel Islands a wide berth. The German Command on the Channel Islands soon woke up to what was afoot and established a naval observation post on Les Minquiers, a reef of rocky outcrops lying some fourteen miles to the south of Jersey. From Les Minquiers sightings of Allied vessels were radioed to the Naval HQ on Guernsey and from there to MOK West (Marineoberkommando West : Naval High Command West) in Germany.

Suddenly, on December 21, 1944, the observation post radioed that it was under attack by an 'English landing craft'. The alarm was short lived, however, when the landing craft — an LCV(P) — was found to contain a junior German naval officer, one



The Kriegsmarine communications bunker on Guernsey was the nerve centre for the raid on Granville. It still stands today, its corridors deserted; the main Seeko bunker control room devoid of any of its former equipment. (Plan by Colin Partridge)



Fähnrich der Marineartillerie (Midshipman of the Naval Artillery) Leker, as well as four paratroopers who had been captured at Brest. They had been employed on the docks at Granville unloading coal boats and, having become somewhat disillusioned with this grubby task, determined to escape. This they did, showing considerable enterprise in making off with the landing craft and reaching Les Minquiers in safety.

Upon being transferred to Naval HQ on Guernsey they were able to furnish full details of what was going on at Granville as well as a description of the weak American defences there. On Christmas Day 1944, as a reward for his initiative in leading the escapers, Fähnrich Leker was sent back to Germany on one of the supply aircraft. His triumphant homecoming was stillborn — over Bastogne the Heinkel was pounced on by a prowling American fighter and shot down in flames. All on board perished.

From information gleaned from the escapers, the German command on the islands learned that the only troops available at Granville were 52 men of the 156th Infantry Regiment whose headquarters were some 20 miles to the north at Barneville. The only weapon of any consequence was a 57mm gun. To provide additional support there was also a small unit consisting of 130 second line French troops armed with captured light German weapons, while a battalion of US labour troops armed with carbines was also on hand but their primary function was to supervise the German PoW labour force working on the docks.

Unwisely, in the euphoria of liberation the previous August, all the fixed German defences, which had been captured more or less intact, had been destroyed. Security of the seaward approaches to Granville was assured by a US Patrol Craft (PC boat), this being armed with one 3-inch gun, one 40mm weapon and six 20mm Oerlikons. The PC was to be on a five minute standby by day to investigate radar tracks and suspicious craft and by night to maintain a constant patrol outside the port between the Videcocq Buoy and the Chausey Isles, which lie a few miles to the west of Granville. The vessel was also supposed to assist in the berthing or assembling of convoys which usually arrived off Granville by late afternoon and sailed at first light. An American report claimed that this was not an easy task due to a lack of communications and the obstinacy of the masters of the coasters! Covering the west coast of the Cotentin peninsula were radar stations at Joburg (code-name 'Goldfish'); Carteret (code-name 'Cosmo'): and at Coutainville (code-name 'Catbird').

Facing the Americans over on the Channel Islands, the German forces were considerable. The main occupation force consisted of the reinforced 319. Infanterie Division which since September 1943 had been commanded by Generalleutnant Graf von Schmettow who had been in the Channel Islands since August 1940 and who was additionally Befehlshaber der Britischen Kanalinseln (Commander of the British Channel Islands). Von Schmettow was a cavalry officer of the old school, brought up in the strict traditions of the Imperial Army. A stern disciplinarian, von Schmettow was nonetheless scrupulously fair not only with his own men, with whom he was extremely popular, but on the civilian side he was often able to turn aside some of the harsher edicts intended for the population which came down from higher commands in France. It was doubtless this side of his nature that later led to his downfall.

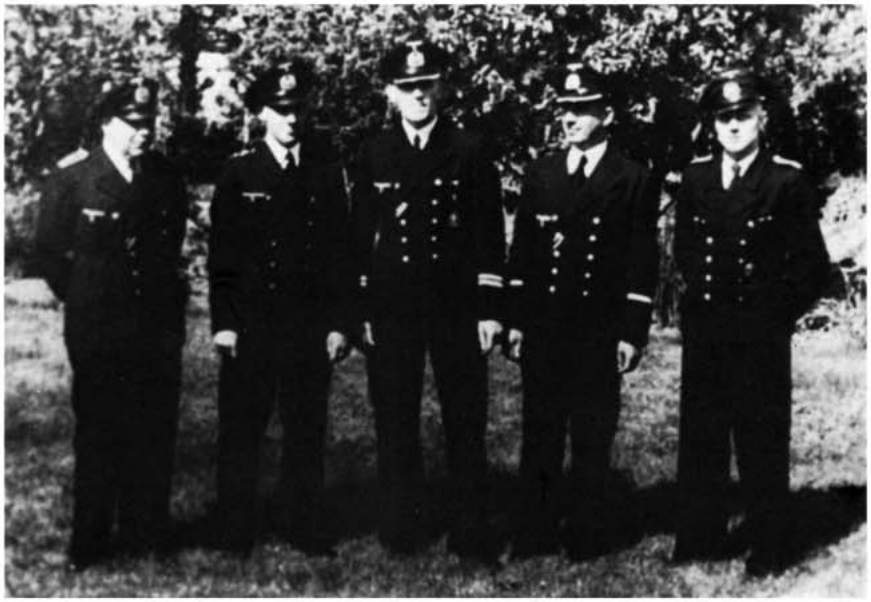
The naval defences of the Channel Islands were as equally strong as those of the Army and were in the hands of the Seeko-KI (Seekommandant Kanalinseln : Naval Commander, Channel Islands). Since the end of July 1942, when the post had been first created, the incumbent had been the highly efficient and competent Kapitän zur See Julius Steinbach but in June 1944 he had been replaced by the notorious Vizeadmiral Friedrich Hüffmeier. Hüffmeier at that time was a fervent Nazi, having attended the Nationalsozialistiche Führungsstab der Kriegsmarine (National Socialist Leadership School of the Navy), but whatever his failings in this direction he was nonetheless a competent deck officer, having commanded the battlecruiser *Scharnhorst* in its famous dash up the English Channel in February 1942.

Following the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944, the Führer began to distrust Army generals and to place more faith in the Navy. Consequently, it was no surprise when Hüffmeier was appointed Chief-of-Staff to von Schmettow in October 1944. However, the former had his sights set on the top job and, more and more, began to elbow the Befehlshaber to one side by sending disparaging reports about von Schmettow to Admiral Theodor Krancke at MOK West.

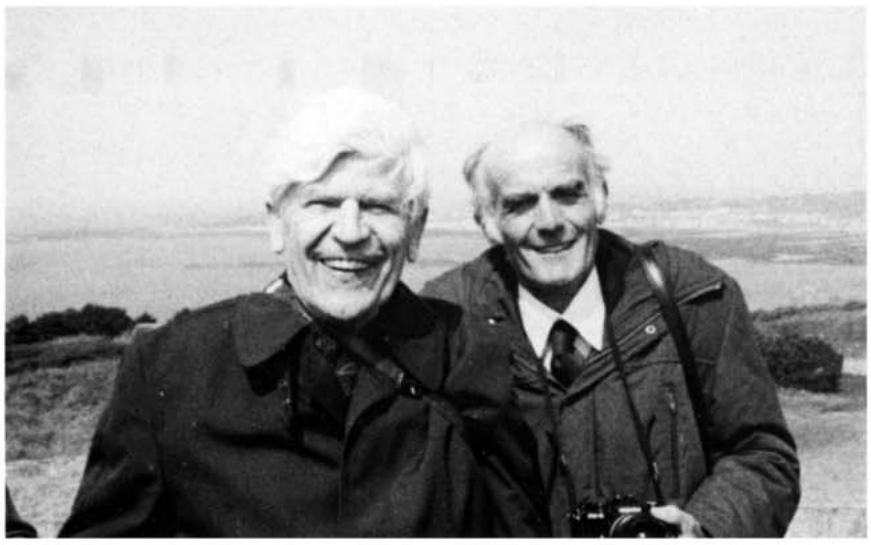
In this matter Hüffmeier was aided by the fact that only the German Navy in the Channel Islands had a transmitter powerful enough to reach Germany direct from Guernsey where all the main Channel Island headquarters were situated. This had not been a major inconvenience when the 319. Division had been able to contact Corps HQ at St Lô prior to June 1944 by telephone, teleprinter or its own radio link, but once the Channel Islands were besieged, the powerful radio link of the Navy gave that arm ascendancy in matters concerning communications as all radio traffic had to pass through their hands.

The naval communications centre was located in a substantial bunker situated at St Jacques on the outskirts of St Peter Port, Guernsey, and in charge as Marinenachrichtensoffizier (Naval Communications Officer) was the highly efficient Oberleutnant Willi Hagedorn.

Following the seizure by the Americans of the French harbours along the Gulf of St Malo, numerous units of the German Navy had fallen back on the Channel Islands; thus Hüffmeier had considerable naval vessels on hand but most of them were laid up due to a



Officers of the naval signals office at St Jacques. L-R: Oberfunkmeister Otto Rohkohl (technical chief); Oberfähnrich zur See Benno Kraemer (MNO III); Oberleutnant zur See Willi Hagedorn (MNO Chief); Leutnant zur See Heinrich Knopp (MNO II); and Oberfunkmeister Max Stolzenburg (Station Chief). (Richard Heaume)



Willi Hagedorn, with the author, Michael Ginns, in May 1982 during a return visit to Guernsey. To this day the former communications officer cannot bring himself to accept that the Allies were intercepting and decoding all his signals through the Ultra operation masterminded from Bletchley Park, Buckinghamshire. (Ken Tough)

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NAVAL CHIEF COMMAND WEST

319TH INFANTRY DIVISION

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WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT LT. GENERAL GRAF VON SCHMETTOW, COMMANDER OF THE 319TH INFANTRY DIVISION AND C. IN C. CHANNEL ISLANDS, IS TRANSFERRED FOR HEALTH REASONS TO THE SUPREME COMMAND OF THE ARMY'S OFFICERS POOL, AND VICE-ADMIRAL HUEFFMEIER, SEA DEFENCE COMMANDANT AND CHIEF OF STAFF CHANNEL ISLANDS, IS APPOINTED C. IN C. CHANNEL ISLANDS. A NEW COMMANDER FOR THE 319TH INFANTRY DIVISION WILL BE ORDERED BY PERSONNEL DIVISION. LT. GENERAL GRAF VON SCHMETTOW IS TO BE DISPATCHED AT ONCE, WITHOUT AWAITING THE ARRIVAL OF THE NEW DIVISIONAL COMMANDER.

'28/2/45++++EGT/SMH

The proof of Ultra's outstanding success, only revealed to the general public in the mid-1970s. German signals radioed to the Guernsey bunker but also picked up by the Y-Service in Britain and deciphered at one of the outstations of the Government Code and Cipher School at Bletchley. This translated transcript now preserved at the Public Record Office, File DEFE 3/542. (Crown Copyright)

chronic fuel shortage. However, still on the active list early in 1945 were the following:

(i) One fast motor torpedo boat, the *S 112*, which had fled from Brest to Guernsey. Having sustained damage to its middle motor, the *S 112* spent most of its time cruising on two engines. The vessel was commanded by Leutnant zur See der Reserve Nikelowski, a man of few words but a highly skilled seaman and, in civilian life, the skipper of a whaler.

(ii) Four M 40 Class minesweepers of the 24. Minensuchflotille (24th Minesweeping Flotilla), the *M 412*, *M 432*, *M 442* and *M 452*, under Kapitänleutnant Mohr. These were armed with one 10.5cm SK c/32 ship's gun and a multiplicity of 3.7cm and 2cm flak weapons.

(iii) Seven large and two medium auxiliary minesweepers, converted trawlers of the 46. MSFl and the 2. Vorpostenbootflotille (2nd Patrol Boat Flotilla) under, respectively, Kapitänleutnant Zimmermann and Fregattenkapitän Lensch.

(iv) Two Kriegsfischerkutter (War Fishing Cutters), the *V 228* and *V 229*, also from the 2. VP Flotille.

(v) Three artillery carriers, the *AF 65, AF 68* and *AF 71*, the remnants of the 6. Artillerieträgerflotille (6th Artillery Carrier Flotilla) which had been based at Cherbourg under Oberleutnant zur See Otto Karl. Hence the unit was known as Gruppe Karl.

(vi) Twelve motor boats of the Hafenschutzflotille Kanalinseln (Harbour Protection Flotilla) under Kapitänleutnant der Reserve Lamperhoff. Of these vessels, only three could manage more than eight knots. The Hafenschutz boats all bore the prefix FK to their numbers, this standing for Frankreich Kanalinseln, or France, Channel Islands, one more piece of evidence that the Germans always considered the islands to be part of France and not England.

(vii) Three tugs.

But to return to Granville. As a result of the information brought by the five German escapees from the port, plans were soon laid for a commando raid. This was to have three aims — firstly, the capture and removal of as many supply ships as possible; secondly, the destruction of as much of the harbour facilities as possible; and lastly, the capture of staff officers for interrogation.

The plans were soon converted into action. Volunteers were called for from among the troops to take part in a special operation. Those selected were all concentrated in Guernsey for secluded training and scaling ladders were constructed. A large scale model of Granville was made for briefing and on January 22, 1945, the minesweepers had their masts removed in order to present a smaller target to American radar.

The first assault against Granville took place during the night of February 6/7. Participating were eight Army assault detachments consisting of 9 officers and 148 men, and two naval detachments with 1 officer and 20 men. Vessels taking part were the four M Class minesweepers, with two auxiliary minesweepers as remote escort and for wing protection in the Cotentin passage, while the three artillery carriers were to perform the same function between Granville and St Malo to the south. Two armed cutters carried some of the assault groups for later transference to the Hafenschutz boats *FK 01*, *FK 04* and *FK 56* to land the diversionary parties on the bathing beaches; a tug was to pull out any prizes, and the *FK 60* to land the harbour assault groups. (The *FK 60* was the LCV(P) in which the escapers had fled from Granville two months earlier and which had been incorporated into the Hafenschutz fleet.) The *S 112* had the task of laying three mines to foul the northern approach to St Malo and to draw off the Granville guard boat.

At first all went well and to plan. The sea was calm but delays arose due to the *V 229* dropping out due to clutch trouble at 12.35 a.m.; then the sea became choppy and difficulties were experienced in transferring the assault parties to the Hafenschutz boats. The decision was taken to abandon the raid but not before one of the boats carrying the diversionary party had approached to within 250 yards of the shore, close enough to observe that no sentries were mounted.

All the raiding vessels returned to Jersey which was reached under cover of darkness and thick fog, with the exception of the *FK 60* whose adventurous career came to an end when she struck a rock south of the island and had to be abandoned without incurring casualties.

Meanwhile, the *S 112* had been successful in laying its mines in positions 48°41" N and 2°06" W, and 48°50" N and 2°06" W. On resuming its patrol line the *S 112* encountered and drew off, as intended, the Granville guard boat, on this occasion the *PC 552* commanded by Lieutenant S. Spielman, USNR. The *PC 552* opened fire, chasing the *S 112* for some 20 miles to a point off Cap Frehel where the latter's superior speed enabled it to draw ahead and make for the shelter of St Peter Port, which it reached at 3.55 a.m. During the brief engagement, however, the lubricating oil tank of the port engine was hit and the contents lost. This went unnoticed in the excitement and the engine continued to run at high speed for another ten minutes until the crankshaft seized and was badly damaged as a result. With only one serviceable engine the *S 112* was unfit for further action and was eventually despatched to Lorient where its defective engines were changed and the vessel remained in service liaising between the Biscay Fortresses for the remainder of the war.

With all his forces safely back in the Channel Islands Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier at last broke radio silence concerning his intentions against Granville and here an interesting fact emerges. The raid has been the subject of many short articles and even an excellent complete book by the French author Jacques Mordal (*Hold Up Naval à Granville*, translated into German but, regrettably, never into English) but none of the authors had access to what we now know as the Ultra Secret, this being due to the thirty-year ban on the dissemination of such information which was relaxed in 1974. During the Second World War the German High Command thought it had a safe and secure method of transmitting secret radio messages through its Enigma encoding machine. In this assumption they were disastrously wrong and thanks to the brilliance of the cryptanalysts at the British Government Code and Cypher School at Bletchley in the county of Buckinghamshire it proved possible to break the Enigma code and often within hours of the transmission of a secret German message the contents would be in the hands of British Intelligence *(see After the Battle No. 37)*.

The mines laid by the S 112 in the northern approaches to St Malo during the night of February 6/7 were in fact British parachute mines dropped by the RAF at the mouth of St Peter Port harbour, Guernsey, in June 1944 to prevent the port being used by U-Boats as an emergency base. Given the enormous tidal range in Channel Island waters, the mines were easily spotted at low water and recovered, being deactivated by Leutnant (Waffen) Heinz Kass who was weapons officer with the 24th Minesweeping Flotilla. He later reactivated the mines when they were required for the first unsuccessful attempt on Granville.

In this matter the Channel Islands were not overlooked and every time a radio sparked into life on the islands the signal was intercepted by a Y Service listening station and the contents of the message were duly decoded at Bletchley and passed on to the appropriate authority. Probably, as mentioned earlier, this was of little consequence for the greater part of the war when most of the German business would have been done by teleprinter or telephone, but once the Channel Islands were cut off from the outside world the radio station at St Jacques really came into its own and Bletchley was able to pay close attention to what was going on. The results of their efforts in the shape of the Channel Islands Enigma radio decodes are enshrined for posterity in the Public Record Office at Kew and from them it may be learnt that when the five escapees from Granville landed in Guernsey at Christmastime, Hüffmeier let MOK West know of their arrival and passed on the details of the Granville harbour defences but requested that no publicity whatsoever be given to the exploit. Thereafter he maintained absolute radio silence about his intentions. However, when the raid of February 7, 1945, failed, the Admiral radioed MOK West and set out what had transpired in several radio messages.

Over the years many writers have remarked on the 'complete surprise' which the Germans achieved when they mounted the second successful raid a month later. There should not have been any surprise whatsoever — in his radio messages to MOK West Hüffmeier remarked that he was aware that the M Class minesweepers had been picked up by the Countainville radar but despite this, and the activities of the *S 112*, the general scope of the raid had not been realised. Then he spelt out his intentions in detail and stated that '. . . repetition of the operation [will take place] at next suitable high tide and appropriate moonlight conditions, in approximately four weeks time.'

After the second successful raid, an American report stated that 'the possibility of such a raid has long been recognised and pointed out by the various authorities'. Bearing in mind the one golden rule that Ultra was never to be compromised and that no information gathered from it could be used unless it could be made to appear that the information had been gleaned from agents or aerial reconnaissance, one can only speculate how much warning, if any, British Naval Intelligence gave the Americans concerning Hüffmeier's plans for Granville.

Meanwhile the German commandos, now concentrated on Jersey, continued their training, most of it taking place in and around the Palace Hotel at Bagatelle until the building disintegrated in an enormous explosion on March 7, two days before the second raid. By this time an interesting development had taken place in the command structure in the Channel Islands. At 6.35 a.m. on February 27, 1945, the Oberbefehlshaber West sent a radio message jointly to MOK West and the 319. Infanterie Division as follows:

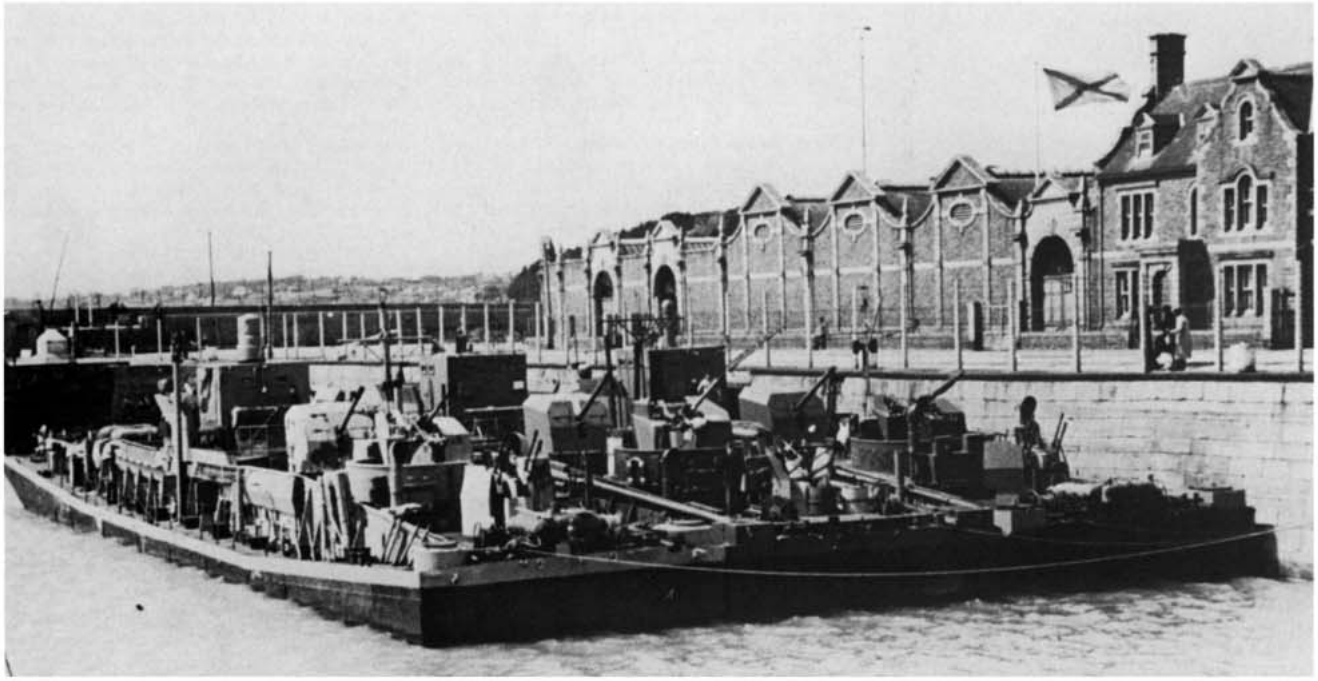
'With immediate effect Generalleutnant Graf von Schmettow, Commander of the 319. Division and Commander-in-Chief, Channel Islands, is transferred for health reasons to the Supreme Command of the Army Officers' Pool and Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier, Naval Commander, Channel Islands and Chief-of-Staff, Channel Islands, is appointed Commander-in-Chief, Channel Islands. A new commander for the 319. Division will be ordered by personnel division. Generalleutnant Graf von Schmettow is to be despatched at once without awaiting arrival of new Divisional Commander.'

Thus, despite the fact that von Schmettow had not seen a doctor for over a year, Hüffmeier had achieved his ambition at last! The removal of Graf von Schmettow could not be effected at once due to the non-arrival of the transport aircraft from Germany. Meanwhile the Granville raid had been mounted with complete success.

At about 9.00 p.m. on March 8, 1945, the German commandos had boarded their craft and set sail from St Helier. Due to the casualties among the vessels that had taken part in the first unsuccessful raid, the task force now consisted of the following:

Group 1a: Two M Class minesweepers, the *M 412* and *M 452* of which the former was the command ship with Kapitänleutnant Mohr on board, both carrying assault troops of the Army for harbour demolition under

The Palace Hotel at Bagatelle, just behind St Helier in Jersey, was taken over by the Wehrmacht in 1940 for a communications centre and later became an officers' training school. Much of the planning for the commando raid on Granville was carried out here including training in the grounds. However on the night of March 7, two days before the raid, a small fire broke out in a ground floor room used as a store for explosives. Because of the plans and documents scattered throughout the hotel, the Kommandant was reluctant to call out the civilian fire brigade and thus risk the operation being compromised. Instead he had his own men under Hans Kegelmann place demolition charges on all three floors to blow out a section of the hotel to create a firebreak. Not surprisingly the whole hotel disintegrated in the resulting explosion, killing nine soldiers and damaging many buildings in the surrounding area. Because of its dangerous condition the shell of the building was later demolished. The site is now occupied by the Palace Close housing estate. (Dave Bishop)



Above: **The three artillery carriers AF 65, AF 68 and AF 71 of Gruppe Karl, seen here in St Helier harbour after the liberation, which knocked out PC 564.** *Right:* **In this close up the SS Eskwood, captured and taken back to Jersey, can be seen in the background. One of the British landing craft which entered the harbour on May 9, 1945 can be seen with the pennant number V1180. (Charles Brown)** *Bottom:* **Far from the sounds of war, the 'Bergerac' isle today hosts its more wealthier visitors. (Dave Bishop)**

Oberleutnant Jagmann as well as naval personnel for the destruction of Granville Harbour radar station and those who would have the task of manning any ships which could be captured and moved. Accompanying this group was the tug *Diecksand*.

Group 1b: The *M 432* and *M 442* which were to stand offshore and put down an artillery barrage on the landward approaches to the harbour to prevent reinforcements being brought up.

Group 2: The three artillery carriers *AF 65*, *AF 68* and *AF 71* under Oberleutnant zur See Otto Karl. These had the task of drawing off and engaging the Granville guardship; giving cover against any enemy vessels which might come up from St Malo, and destroying the lighthouse on Grand Chausey to make enemy pursuit more difficult.

Group 3: Three fast Hafenschutz vessels, the *FK 01*, *FK 04* and *FK 56* under Kapitänleutnant Lamperhoff and Oberleutnant zur See Meyer, which would land the diversionary parties to raid the spa hotels with the intention of capturing staff officers residing therein. The diversionary parties were led by Hauptmann Schellenberg.

Group 4: The auxiliary minesweeper *M 4613* and the cutter *FL 13* (the latter being the one surviving unit of the former Hafenschutz fleet of Lezadrieux), as screening unit for the Cotentin passage.

Embarked on these vessels were:

(i) Eight Army assault detachments with ten officers and 148 men spread over Groups 1a and 3.
(ii) Three naval assault groups with two officers and 34 men on Group 1b.
(iii) One Luftwaffe flak crew of six men on Group 1a.

Almost as soon as it left St Helier the task force was picked up by the American Army

Also found anchored in the harbour were the three minesweepers M 432, M 442 and M 452 which successfully returned to base. After the operation the ships were laid up for lack of fuel and given to the French Navy after the war. (Charles Brown)

radar at Coutainville. This took place at 9.49 p.m. and the information was passed to US Naval HQ at Cherbourg, to the 156th Infantry Regiment at Barneville who were put on standby, and to the Officer-in-Charge at Granville. The Officer-in-Charge, according to an account of the raid published in the *History of US Naval Operations of World War II, Part XI*, is said to have treated the reports of approaching radar tracks as 'interesting information' and no alert was sounded. The information, however, was passed to the commander of the American guard boat for that night, the *PC 564*.

The *PC 564* had not long been in service and carried a mainly scratch crew of storemen, yeomen and maintainance men commanded by Lieutenant Percy Sandell, USNR. It was Lieutenant Sandell's first command and he had only been on board for about twelve days. Nevertheless, as soon as he received the report on the advancing radar plots, he turned his small craft in the direction of the oncoming enemy. At the same time HM Trawler *Pearl* which had arrived off Granville that afternoon was ordered from the shore to accompany the *PC 564*. For some unknown reason, and despite repeated signals, the *Pearl* stuck by her charge, a small collier named the *Gem*, and took no part in the battle about to commence.

Air cover requested by Cherbourg from C-in-C Plymouth did not materialise and two USN torpedo boats, the *PT 458* and *PT 460*, which had been ordered south from Cherbourg, were halted opposite Carteret in case the forces approaching Granville proved to be nothing more than a diversion to draw attention away from a much larger attack against Cherbourg itself.

Although the *PC 564* was on her own, Lieutenant Sandell did not hesitate and set out to investigate (he was later to be commended for the celerity with which he and his crew conducted their part in the operation), setting a course which would intercept the targets to the west of the Chausey Isles — this, of course, being precisely what the artillery carriers wanted him to do.

Just before midnight the *PC 564* fired three starshells which illuminated the enemy and, having identified them for what they were, Lieutenant Sandell ordered his 3-inch gun to open fire. This it did but after just one round the gun jammed and the breech would not close. Almost immediately the *PC 564* herself was illuminated by a starshell and simultaneously struck by an 8.8cm shell on the wheelhouse. This not only destroyed the power steering and compasses but also killed all present on the bridge with the exception of Lieutenant Sandell and Lieutenant Klinger the gunnery officer. Further shells and tracer shot hit the *PC 564*, knocking out the secondary armament and starting a small fire. This was soon extinguished but now the situation was considered hopeless and the order given to stop engines and prepare to abandon ship. Without waiting for further orders, fifteen men went over the side immediately, into a life raft and were later considered lost. (In actual fact the Germans soon rescued the party, with one exception, who were then destined to spend the remaining six weeks of the war in a PoW camp on Jersey.)

The engines of the *PC 564* having stopped, the firing ceased. At once, Lieutenant Klinger suggested that they had nothing to lose and might as well make a run for it. The engines were re-started and they made off successfully, heading for the Pierre d'Herpin light and the vessel was beached near Cancale from where medical assistance was summoned and the wounded tended. The next day the *PC 564* was towed to St Malo and later to Plymouth for repairs.

Believing that the US patrol craft had been sunk, the artillery carriers now took up their secondary task of shelling the Grand Chausey lighthouse until the light was extinguished.

Today the former entrance to the inner harbour has been filled in although the outline of the old flood gates can still be traced on the ground. (Aerofilms)

Meanwhile at Granville itself, the commando raid was in full swing. At 1.00 a.m. the *M 412*, the *M 452* and the *Diecksand* entered the harbour, the last two coming alongside and putting their landing parties ashore to carry out demolitions after the harbour had been raked with fire from 2cm and 3.7cm weapons. The only major loss suffered by the Germans in the entire raid occurred when the *M 412* ran aground in the outer harbour. The tug transferred the minesweeper's landing party to the shore and, having attached a line to the stranded vessel, attempted to pull her off the mud. The effort was in vain and as time was of the essence, Kapitänleutnant Mohr decided to abandon his command ship and transfer to the *M 452*. Secret documents were destroyed, charges set and the *M 412* blown up. In several post-raid reports the Americans erroneously bestowed the name *de Schelde* on the *M 412*, this having been discovered on a name plate on the wreck. This, however, was not the name of the vessel but of the shipyard that had built her. Like many of her sister ships, the *M 412* had been constructed in 1941 by the de Schelde Shipyard at Vlissingen in Holland.

It has sometimes been said about the Granville raid that for once the Germans slipped up and were caught by a falling tide due to a miscalculation. In fact, no such slip-up occurred. In an account written in 1952, Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier made it clear that the timing of the raid depended upon two factors; one of these was a moonless night with a high tide at a time which gave as much cover of darkness as possible. High tide, with no moon, was at midnight on the night of March 8/9 but it was a neap tide with a height of only 31 feet. Still, it was a risk that had to be taken and the raid was mounted that night as the Swedish Red Cross ship *Vega* was due in Jersey with another cargo of food parcels for the beleaguered civilian population and the Germans did not want the Master to see any of the preparations which were going on at St Helier fearing that he might inform the British. In their assumption the Germans were correct as surviving documents show that the Captain did indeed pass on information about anything he saw in Channel Islands' harbours.

In passing, it may be mentioned that the International Red Cross later lodged a strong protest with the German Government about the raid taking place when the *Vega* was in Channel Islands' waters. The Germans, for their part, retorted that the *Vega* was 25 miles away in Guernsey when the raid took place and so the Red Cross had nothing to grumble about!

The same neap tide that trapped the *M 412* also negated the plan to bring out as many colliers as possible. The greater majority were sitting on dried out berths and, unable to extricate them, the Germans disabled the vessels with explosives. Only the SS *Eskwood* was afloat and the German boarding party quickly made her ready for sea. The Master of the *Eskwood*, Captain Wright, had been killed in the indiscriminate firing that had preceded the raid but still on board were Chief Engineer Bill Woodhead, First Officer John Campbell, Second Engineer George Harrison, Firemen Robert Dick and James Blair, Donkeyman Joseph Sworda and ship's gunner Lance Bombardier James Mattock of the Royal Artillery. Urged on at gunpoint by the Germans, the crew members helped to raise steam in the boilers of the *Eskwood* while at the same time the *Diecksand* eased the ship through the lock. In his 1952 account of the raid, Hüffmeier, stated that the British 'took a sportsmanlike view of the whole proceedings', but if the language used by Mr Woodhead in a telephone conversation 39 years after the event is anything to go by, his appreciation of the whole situation was anything but sportsmanlike!

On board the *Eskwood* the Germans were delighted to find all the secret charts and convoy routing instructions for all the coastal waters around Britain. However, their hopes of capturing a shipload of coal were dashed as the cargo had already been discharged and the only coal on board was 112 tons in the ship's bunkers.

In the middle of all this confusion, the diversionary party had stormed ashore from

rubber dinghies onto the bathing beaches and had attacked the spa hotels. In view of their declared intention to capture staff officers, it seems clear that the Germans believed that Granville was for a time the location of the headquarters of no less a person than General Eisenhower himself. SHAEF Forward HQ had in fact been situated about five miles to the south the previous September but, by the time of the raid, General Eisenhower and his staff had long since moved off eastwards. The town was, however, the headquarters of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) which had selected Granville as a base to instruct their personnel before setting off into the war-ravaged areas of Europe that they were to control.

Billetted in the Hôtel Normandie that night was Mr John Alexander, B.Sc., a Principal Welfare Officer of UNRRA, as well as several US officers who had only arrived in Granville that evening and whose intended duty was to brief newly-arrived UNRRA officials on the conditions that they were likely to encounter in European towns and cities. Mr Alexander was not happy in the Hôtel Normandie; until eight months previously the building had been used as a Gestapo interrogation centre and the roof space was divided into small cells most of which had hooks on the walls and bloodstains on the floor. Nevertheless he had retired to bed on the evening of the 8th only to be awoken by the sound of gunfire at about 1.00 a.m. Dressing hurriedly Mr Alexander went onto the landing to find himself confronted by armed German troops who motioned him to raise him arms. Doing as ordered, he was driven out at gunpoint to the beach where he was soon joined by three US officers wearing nothing more than their pyjamas covered by a uniform jacket.

The FK 56, one of the three Hafenschutz vessels commanded by Hauptmann Schellenberg who led the diversionary parties to attack the main hotels with the intention of capturing staff officers. (R. H. Mayne)

The three officers were Captain R. H. Shirley and First Lieutenants N. Younggren and W. Wendell Heilman who, as already mentioned, had also only arrived in Granville that evening knowing nothing of the existence of the Channel Islands or the fact that there were still German forces there, believing themselves to be hundreds of miles away from the enemy.

For Lieutenant Younggren his first night at the Hôtel Normandie was to be a special one. For Xmas 1944 his mother had sent him a present of a pair of pyjamas but, being in a battle zone — the Ardennes — he had never

His men came ashore here where the Hôtel Normandie and Hôtel les Bains lie just behind the northern beach. (Aerofilms)

had the opportunity to wear them. Now (as he believed) he had been assigned to a secure rear area and with the enemy 500 miles to the east and a comfortable bed in a large hotel, at last the chance had come to put on his new pyjamas for the first time. Suddenly, like Mr Alexander, the three officers heard gunfire and, on looking out, saw soldiers who they immediately recognised as Germans coming up the beach. While trying to puzzle out where the enemy had come from they hurriedly threw their jackets over their pyjamas and dived down a fire escape straight into the arms of a waiting patrol, the leader of which ordered them onto the beach. At the same moment a jeep driven by Private Mark Layman, with Lieutenant Colonel Anderson as passenger, roared up. The Colonel had been sent to find out exactly what was going on — this he soon did when he found himself looking down the muzzles of the Germans' automatic weapons. Both he and his driver joined the group on the beach and all of them were ferried by dinghy to the Hafenschutz boats waiting offshore and eventually to Jersey where Mr Alexander had the dubious distinction of becoming the only UNRRA official to have been made a prisoner-of-war.

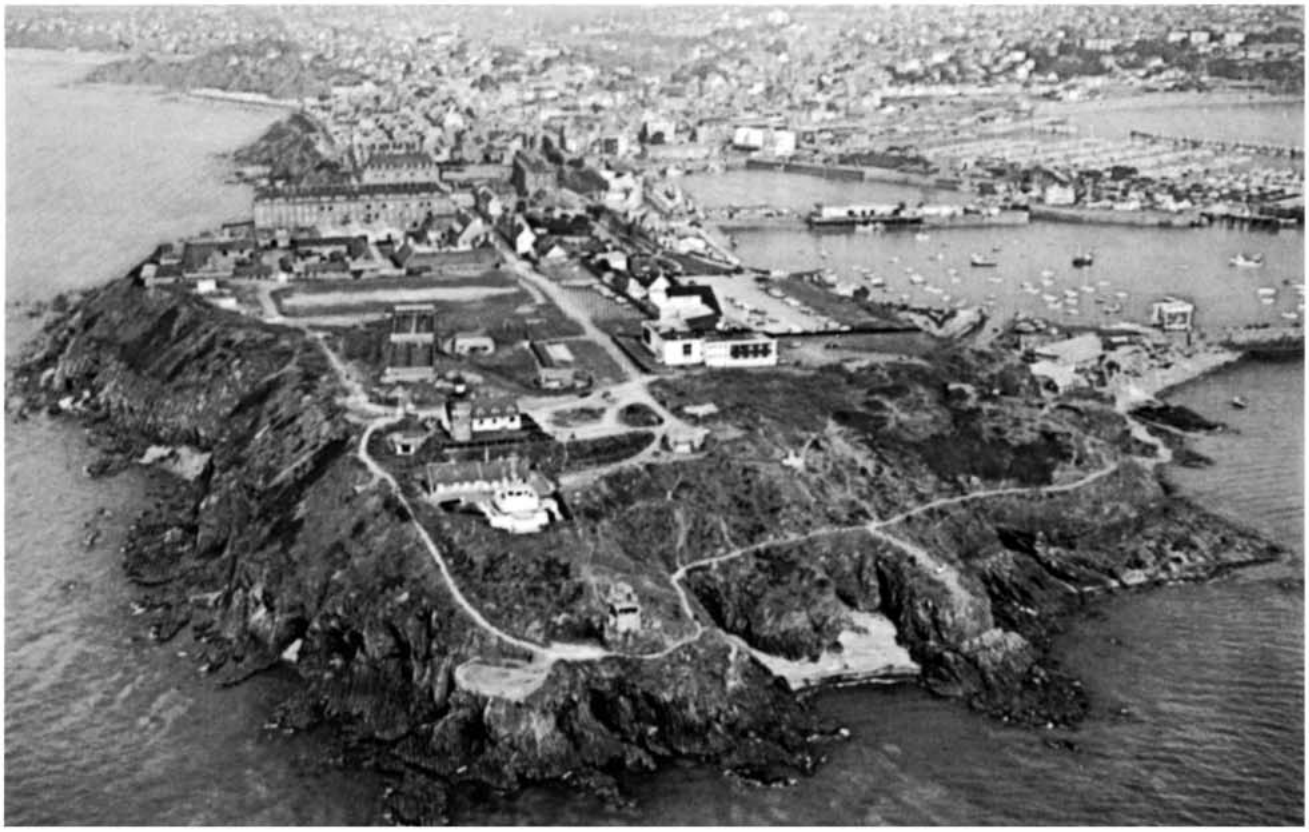
The diversionary party also spread out into the streets of the town to the rear of the hotels, firing indiscriminately to cause maximum confusion, and it was here that the majority of French civilian casualties were caused when people, alarmed by the noise, put on their lights and opened the bedroom windows thereby inviting a burst of automatic fire.

What few American defences there were in the harbour were thrown into a state of confusion. No official alert had been given and no sirens sounded on the grounds that previously, when radar tracks of approaching vessels had been reported, they had always turned back! The only precautions taken were by Major Brown, the port commander, who, on receiving a second warning of the approaching radar targets, caused the harbour area to be blacked out and ordered a party of 79 German PoWs, who had just arrived to work on the coal boats, to be marched into a stockade.

The majority of the American troops were quartered at La Haute Ville, or 'The Rock' as they called it. As the two minesweepers nosed their way into the harbour, Major Brown and a Captain T. Wilkinson were on the Rock trying to organise some sort of defence — a somewhat hopeless task as the only weapons that the US troops could muster were carbines. At 12.45 a.m., with 10.5cm shells from

Above: **The Hôtel Normandie provided four of the prisoners taken that night. John Alexander, an official of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Adminstration, had just arrived that evening with the express purpose of arranging quarters for displaced persons who were expected shortly in the town. A former Warden at Oxford House Educational Settlement, Risca, Monmouthshire, after the war he became Warden of the Mary Ward Centre in Bloomsbury, London, where he remained until his retirement in 1971. He died on December 2, 1981 aged 79.**

First Lieutenant Newell Younggren was one of the five Americans captured, photographed *left* in February 1944. In June 1984 Dr Younggren, accompanied by his two grandsons, returned to Jersey for the first time since the war. Here Margaret Ginns shows him his former cell in the Military Prison on South Hill which he occupied for one week when he first arrived on Jersey. He brought back the actual set of pyjamas he was wearing when captured which he presented to the Channel Islands Occupation Society together with the chess set he used while a prisoner-of-war. (Jersey Evening Post)

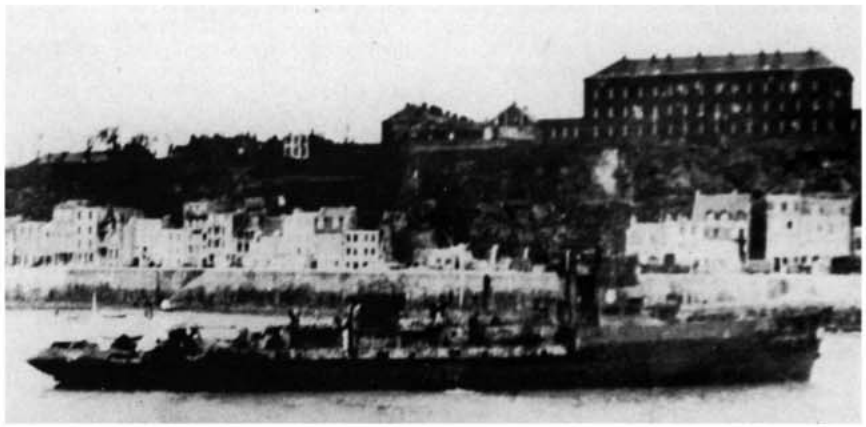


The signal station on the end of the Pointe du Roc lay alongside the lighthouse and was shelled by the German vessels. The US Navy personnel manning the position managed to maintain radio communication until the supply failed.

the *M 432* and *M 442* falling on the Rock, Major Brown and his companion ordered the troops of the French Security Garrison out of their barracks. The French officers had the idea that the Americans were only practising and it was only with considerable urging and finally a firm order that the French unit came out. They were dispersed along the wall of the road which runs high above, and parallel to, the harbour but seem to have contributed little to the defence.

Situated on the headland at the end of the Rock was the harbour radar station, one of the objectives of the German demolition parties. Here, with only light weapons, the US troops put up such a spirited resistance that the Germans were driven off after the officer leading the party had been killed.

Down in the harbour area itself the Germans had complete superiority. Control points were set up and at the same time demolition charges were placed on cranes, a railway locomotive, and in the colliers lying in the dried out berths. It was in this vicinity that most of the casualties on the Allied side occurred, particularly among the crews of the merchant vessels when they offered resistance. Of the 79 prisoners in the stockade, 67 were



French troops in the barracks thought the noise of battle was an American exercise and finally had to be ordered out of bed. They manned the road in front of their quarters overlooking the grounded M 412.

Leutnant zur See Scheufele — killed attacking the radar station. (R. H. Mayne)

After its Captain had been killed, Chief Engineer Woodhead *left* was forced, together with other members of the Eskwood crew, to raise steam and sail to Jersey where he was imprisoned for the last few weeks of the war. After the war he remained at sea with coasters and later with grain ships working between Canada and the UK. *Above:* This group picture was taken on the Eskwood after hostilities were over. Second Engineer George Harrison (left), First Officer John Campbell (sitting right), and Bill Woodhead (second from left). (W. Woodhead)

released and boarded the German craft in the harbour to be returned to a somewhat dubious kind of freedom in Jersey.

Once the *Eskwood* had passed through the lock, the assault troops began an orderly withdrawal which was completed by 3.00 a.m. Soon afterwards the first elements of reinforcements from 156th Infantry Regiment began to enter the town. But too late — the raiders had flown! Apart from the loss of the *M 412* and the failure to destroy the radar station, the whole raid had gone exactly as planned, thereby giving great satisfaction to the Germans and causing enormous embarrassment to the Americans.

As the task force was returning to Jersey it was noticed that the lighthouse at Carteret, fourteen miles away from Jersey, had been lit. Fearing that this had been done in order to guide naval reinforcements from Cherbourg through the Cotentin passage, the 15cm German batteries Haesaler and Schlieffen, on Jersey's east coast, opened fire at 4.30 a.m. Shots from these batteries landed on the shore line opposite Barneville and Carteret until the light was extinguished. St Helier was reached safely by 7.00 a.m. and the victorious German troops disembarked to return to their units amid congratulations from the High Command, while their prisoners were escorted to the old military prison situated on South Hill, overlooking the harbour, where the PoW camp was located.

American reaction to the raid was to put in hand a reorganisation of the Granville harbour defences, to reinforce and increase the mobility of the 156th Infantry Regiment at Barneville, and to strongly recommend the obliteration of all German naval forces in Channel Islands harbours by saturation bombing. The populations of the towns of St Helier and St Peter Port can be eternally grateful that the last mentioned countermeasure was never put in hand, for they too would undoubtedly have been obliterated along with the German Navy! The decision not to bomb the Channel Island harbours was probably taken as it was obvious by this time that the Second World War in Europe was nearing its inevitable conclusion.

Nevertheless if the Allies could recognise this fact, Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier had absolutely no intention of doing so. Flushed with the success of the Granville operation and to back up his pledge to hold out in the Channel Islands to the end of 1945 and beyond, if necessary, he was soon plotting another raid against the French coast. Reasoning that having attacked Granville once, the Americans would not expect him to strike at the same spot again, Hüffmeier was now determined to load the captured SS *Eskwood* with concrete blocks and sink her in the entrance to Granville harbour. Simultaneously one of the several cargo vessels laid up in Channel Island harbours would be similarly loaded and sunk at the entrance to St Malo.

As soon as his plans were finalised, and thinking that his Enigma radio traffic was secure, Hüffmeier now contacted MOK West and announced that he would put the plan into operation in the early hours of May 7, 1945. At the same time that all this scheming was going on in the Channel Islands, however, great events were taking place elsewhere, for by now Grossadmiral Karl Dönitz had succeeded Hitler as Führer of Germany and was making peace overtures to the Anglo-Americans. Thus, despite the fact that MOK West had given tacit approval to the planned operation in a radio message despatched in the early hours of May 5, later the same day another message was urgently radioed:

To all Fortress Commanders and Naval Commanders

MOST IMMEDIATE

Naval War Staff has ordered:

Cease all action against the British and Americans forthwith. This applies only to offensive operations at or by sea against these powers such as U-Boat warfare or the operations planned against Granville and St Malo. The order does not apply to the defence of the land or sea fronts.

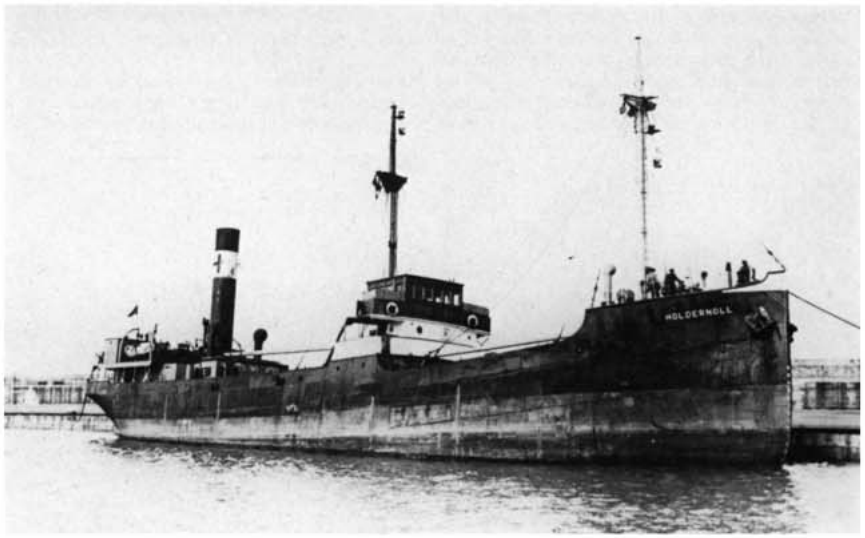
Hüffmeier, however, felt obliged to argue and replied at 9.30 a.m. on May 6 '. . . preparations for the raid are well in hand. In my opinion this attack is not an attack against the Anglo-Americans but on supplies for the French, thus relieving our Fortresses on the mainland. Request clarification today'.

At 3.38 p.m. the same day he got his reply:

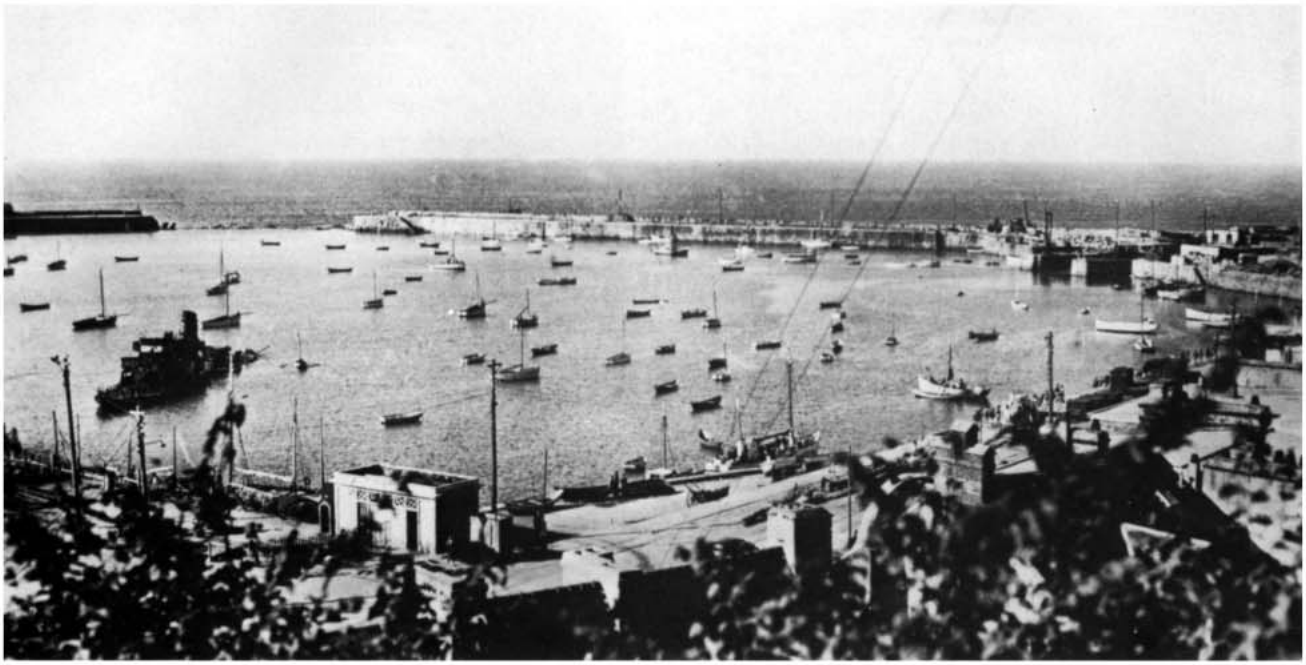
From MOK West to Commander-in-Chief, Channel Islands

MOST IMMEDIATE — BLITZ

The Admiral of the Fleet orders that the operation envisaged for May 7 should not be carried out.



The old lady herself has survived several changes of both ownership and name. Here as the SS Holdernoll she returns to Jersey in the 1950s. (Jersey Evening Post)



The war is over . . . it is 1946 . . . yet the German minesweeper still lies scuttled in the Avant-Port. The dry dock can be see on the right with reconstruction work underway to repair the damaged mole.

This cancellation saved Hüffmeier from a nasty surprise. Unknown to him all this radio traffic had been carefully intercepted and decoded at Bletchley. The end of the war in Europe was now but two days away and it no longer mattered that Ultra should not be compromised. Although there is no documentary evidence to support this theory, on this occasion the Americans must have received ample warning for they were waiting all around Granville with their 150mm field artillery backed up by strong ground forces.

With the end of the war Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier and most of his 28,000 strong garrison were shipped off to captivity in Britain and the Channel Islands settled down to try to return to normality.

Today a trip from Jersey to Granville takes about three hours on the MV *Brittania*, and a very pleasant journey it is too. The barracks from which the French troops refused to turn out are still in use by the French Army while on the walls of the Restaurant Guepratte hangs a photograph of the *M 412* lying on the harbour bed. The Hôtel Normandie, the Hôtel des Bains and the Hôtel de Gourmet which German troops raided with automatic weapons blazing still stand and, if one knows where to look, the 'spang' marks of the bullets which killed the French civilians may still be seen in the Rue General Patton. Otherwise there is little tangible evidence today that the raid ever took place other than the graves in the municipal cemetery bearing the date Mars 9, 1945.

Two points remain to be clarified about the Granville operation — firstly, who actually was responsible for the planning and implementation? Most post-war accounts favour Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier and up to the time of his death in 1974 he never disagreed with this suggestion. However, the moving spirit behind the whole undertaking was in fact Generalleutnant Graf von Schmettow and absolute proof of this was contained in a triumphant radio message sent by no less a person than Hüffmeier himself at 8.04 a.m. on the morning of March 9, 1945 (i.e., only one hour after the raiders had returned to St Helier):

From Commander-in-Chief, Channel Islands to MOK West

Emergency — Preliminary Report

Raid on Granville (including harbour destruction) planned by Generalleutnant von Schmettow and broken off on 7/2 was replanned and, at my request, repeated under his control during the night . . .

On Jersey liberation brought a quick release for the twenty-seven prisoners taken from Granville. Today most of the old British military prison on South Hill where they were held has been demolished, and only the granite sheds on the right remain. The new construction is now occupied by the Jersey Department of Public Buildings and Works. (Courtesy H. Vibert/Dave Bishop)

The lintel above the window over the butcher's sign still bears a bullet mark — a tragic reminder of the burst which killed Mademoiselle Laignel.

Marcel Guilbert's grave in the municipal cemetery. The 40-year-old dockworker was killed as he fled up the Rue General Patton instead of taking cover.

The message then went on to enumerate the forces employed, objectives achieved, casualties, etc. Some of the figures quoted were inaccurate initially and were later corrected in a reappraisal. It is from this report that the often quoted figure of 55 German prisoners released from American captivity originates but the actual figure was 67 and this brings us to the second and more humorous point about the raid which needs clarification: what was the reaction of these PoWs to their sudden release from American captivity? From the accounts given by former German servicemen who now return to Jersey on holiday, they were not particularly impressed. Although they were performing hard and dirty work on the Granville coal boats, at least 'for them the war was over' and they were comfortably billetted and fed with ample US prison camp rations. To be transformed at a stroke to active duty on the cold and hungry Channel Islands, where the staple diet was swedes and limpets, did not go down at all well and their bitter complaints about their suddenly altered circumstances were so loud and incessant that eventually they had to be segregated from the rest of the garrison to avoid spreading dissension in the ranks! Of the original 79 held in the stockade at Granville that night, the 12 who vanished into the town under cover of darkness, later to be rounded up by the Americans, were doubtless fully aware of what they were doing!

In planning the raid the Germans had not anticipated that they would catch the Americans so much off their guard nor that they would meet so little opposition, otherwise the damage caused would have been far greater. As it was, the following results were achieved:

DAMAGE TO SHIPPING

SS *Parkwood* — one boiler destroyed, hole blown in starboard side.

SS *Nephrite* — boiler destroyed, mine exploded in fiddley and No. 2 hatch.

SS *Kyle Castle* — charges exploded in engine room, hull holed below water line.

SS *Heinen* — bullet hole through wheelhouse window.

This, however, was not as disastrous as it appears, and by March 11, two days after the raid, three of the four damaged vessels were ready for sea.

DAMAGE TO DOCK INSTALLATIONS

(a) Of the five portal cranes on the North Quay Nos. 1, 2, and 3 could be repaired in one day; No. 4 was in a very bad state, while No. 5 was operable.

(b) Of the six portal cranes on the South Quay No. 1 could be repaired in one day but Nos. 2-6 were badly damaged.

(c) Of the six crawler cranes three were seriously damaged whilst three could still be operated.

(d) One 22-ton Kearing crane was badly damaged.

(e) Three stiff leg derricks remained in a fair working condition.

(f) One shunting locomotive was destroyed and a hand grenade had exploded in a Navy jeep.

Hüffmeier's 1952 account of the raid also states that an ammunition bunker was blown up and eight lorries destroyed. The American report, however, makes no mention of this and goes on to stress the fact that the harbour had not been as badly damaged as it might have been bearing in mind the fact that the Germans had complete control of the area for two hours. Within two days of the raid the port was back at work, albeit at a reduced capacity.

CASUALTIES

Casualties suffered on the Allied side were as follows:

US forces on land

Killed: Major Ben Ritter, Army Medical Corps. Missing: 5 (later announced as PoWs). Wounded: 2.

US personnel on the PC 564

Killed: Lieutenants T. M. Page and R. A. Miller, and crewmen R. G. Antall, W. T. Bagwell, J. V. Benesevich, E. J. Lightfoot, R. J. Moore, J. F. Newman, A. Piombino, D. G. Riley, C. L. Rounseville, R. M. Rowland, R. J. Butts, and one unknown. Total: 14. Missing: 14 (all later found to be prisoners-of-war). Wounded: 11.

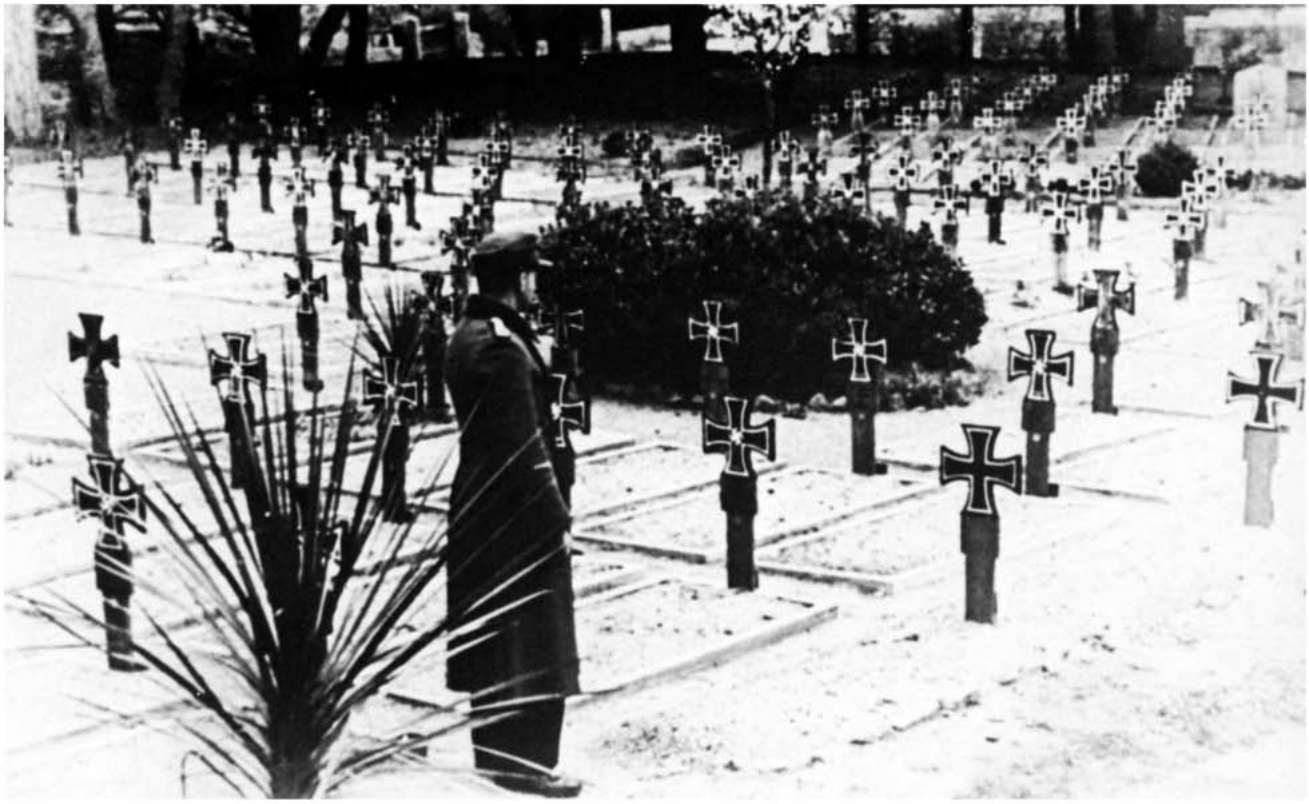
British personnel

Killed: Captain Fraser (Master of the SS *Kyle Castle*), Captain Wright (Master of the SS *Eskwood*), Lieutenant Frederick Lightholler, DSC, RNVR (Port Liaison Officer), Fireman George Bell, Able Seaman Charles Olsson, and Gunner Gollen, RA (SS *Kyle Castle*), Able Seaman Gordon Wills and Able Seaman Richard Lees (SS *Nephrite*). Total: 8. Missing: 1 UNRRA official, 6 Merchant Navy personnel, 1 Royal Artillery NCO (all later found to be PoWs). Wounded: 9 Merchant Navy personnel.

French Civilians

Killed: Maurice Deshayes, Pierre Giroux, Pierre Juin, Marcel Guilbert, Mme. Le Clerc and Mme. Laignel. Total: 6. Wounded: 8.

On the German side the material losses were confined to one M Class minesweeper abandoned and blown up, and three dinghies abandoned and washed ashore on the bathing beach. Casualties were negligible and amounted to one missing (left behind and taken prisoner by the Americans), fifteen wounded and three killed, these being Leutnant zur See Scheufele (the leader of the radar station demolition party whose body was left behind) and Oberfeldwebel Josef Kunkel and Obergefreiter Paul Pfahler, of Grenadier Regiments 584 and 583 respectively, who were buried with full military honours in the German section of St Brelade's Cemetery in Jersey. Oberleutnant zur See Otto Karl on AF 65 received the award of the Knight's Cross.



When compared with Allied operations, the Germans mounted few commando raids during the war but the attack on Granville might easily be described as their most successful. Even the official American report, while it attempted to minimise the extent of the damage, admitted that 'the enemy had fire superiority . . . which enabled him to set off demolitions at will. . . . In fact he had complete control of the Granville area and were his objective that of conquest, he was the conqueror'. The Germans lost one man taken prisoner with three others killed. The bodies of Obergefreiter Paul Pfahler, 20 years old from Grenadier Regiment 583, and Oberfeldwebel Josef Kunkel, aged 29, of Grenadier Regiment 584, were carried back to Jersey for burial with full military honours in the German war cemetery at St Brelade. In 1961 when the German section was dismantled by the German War Graves Commission the remains were exhumed and reinterred in the charnel-house at Mont-de-Huisnes near Mont-St-Michel in Normandy. Both commandos were placed in Tomb 52 — Pfahler in Room 86 and Kunkel in 84. Today the Volksbund Deutche Kriegsgräberfürsorge has no trace of the whereabouts of the last resting place of Leutnant zur See Scheufele who had been left behind in France after being killed storming the radar station. *Below:* **Michael Ginns surveys the same cemetery forty years later. (The British casualties at Granville were buried in Bayeux War Cemetery.)**

I would like to thank the following for assistance given in the compilation of this article: Robin Cox for supplying certain information; Michael Luke of Springfield, Illinois, for seeking out photos: Kapitän zur See Karl Heinz Kassens of Wilhelmshafen for spending considerable time in tracking down the relevant 1952 edition of 'Wehrwissenschaftliche Rundschau' containing Vizeadmiral Hüffmeier's account of the raid; Dr Leslie Hill MA, PhD, for translating the same; Herr Willi Hagedorn, Dr Newell Younggren; the Public Record Office for access to archive material; and finally to my wife Margaret for her continuing enthusiasm and for turning over to me much of her research material into the subject of Allied prisoners-of-war in the Channel Islands.